OCT 29 1918

The Black Cat

15 cents

November 1918

Clever Short Stories

These City Physicians Explain Why They Prescribe Nuxated Iron

To Make Healthier Women and Stronger, Sturdier Men

NOW BEING USED BY OVER THREE MILLION PEOPLE ANNUALLY

By enriching the blood and creating thousands of new red blood cells, it often quickly transforms the flabby flesh, toneless tissues, and pallid cheeks of weak, anæmic men and women into a glow of health. Increases the strength of delicate, nervous run-down folks in two weeks' time in many instances.

IT is conservatively estimated that over three million people annually in this country alone are taking Nuxated Iron. Such astonishing results have been reported from its use both by doctors and laymen, that a number of physicians in various parts of the country have been asked to explain why they prescribe it so extensively, and why it apparently produces so much better results than were obtained from the old forms of inorganic iron.

Extracts from some of the letters are given below:

Dr. Ferdinand King, a New York physician and Medical Author, says: "There can be no sturdy iron men without iron." Pallor means anaemia. Anaemia means iron deficiency. The skin of anaemic men and women is pale—the flesh flabby. The muscles lack tone, the brain fags and the memory fails and they often become weak, nervous, irritable, despondent and melancholy. When the iron goes from the blood of women, the roses go from their cheeks.

"I have used Nuxated Iron widely in my own practice in most severe aggravated conditions with unfailing results. I have induced many other physicians to give it a trial, all of whom have given me most surprising reports in regard to its great power as a health and strength builder."

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Dr. James Francis Sullivan, formerly physician of Bellevue Hospital (Outdoor Dept.), New York, and the Westchester County Hospital said: "I have strongly emphasized the great necessity of physicians making blood examinations of their weak, anaemic, run-down patients. Thousands of persons go on year after year suffering from physical weakness and a highly nervous condition due to lack of sufficient iron in their red blood corpuscles, without ever realizing the real and true cause of their trouble. Without iron in your blood your food merely passes through the body, somewhat like corn through an old mill with rollers so wide apart that the mill can't grind.

"But in my opinion you can't make strong, vigorous, successful, sturdy iron men by feeding them on metallic iron. The forms of metallic iron must go through a semi-digestive process to transform them into organic iron — Nuxated Iron — before they are so ready to be taken up and assimilated by the human system.

"Notwithstanding all that has been said and written on the subject by well-known physicians, thousands of people still insist in dosing themselves with metallic iron simply, I suppose, because it costs a few cents less. I strongly advise readers in all cases, to get a physician's prescription for organic iron—Nuxated Iron—or if you don't want to go to this trouble then purchase only Nuxated Iron in its original packages and see that this particular name (Nuxated Iron) appears on the package. If you have taken preparations such as Nux and Iron and other similar iron products and failed to get results, remember that such products are an entirely different thing from Nuxated Iron."

If you are not strong or well, you owe it to yourself to make the following test: See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five-grain tablets of ordinary Nuxated iron three times per day for two weeks, then test your strength again and see how much you have gained.

MANUFACTURERS' NOTE: Nuxated Iron, which is prescribed and recommended by physicians, is not a secret remedy, but one which is well known to druggists. Unlike the older inorganic iron products, it is easily assimilated, does not injure the teeth, make them black, nor upset the stomach. The manufacturers guarantee successful and entirely satisfactory results to every purchaser or they will refund your money. It is dispensed in this city by all good druggists.

The Black Cat

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Contents

Call It A Day	*Frederick J. Jackson*	3
The Girl at the Luzon	*Harriette Wilbur*	9
Triangular Finance	*A. L. Crabb*	15
An Essay From France	*Gaston Picquet*	21
A Tale of Two Shadows	*Ernest Elwood Stanford*	22
The Crime of Mr. Figg	*Weare Holbrook*	28
The Dim Gray Streak	*R. Ray Baker*	32
Tempo di Valse	*Vincent Starrett*	36
The Man With the Stick	*Clarence L. Hay*	42
The Black Cat Club		44

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THE BLACK CAT AT NEWSDEALERS

THE BLACK CAT should be on sale at every news stand in the country but we are very often in receipt of letters from different localities stating that the magazine is not on sale there. Now that the government asks all publishers to restrict newsdealers in the privilege of returning unsold copies it will doubtless be harder to improve the distribution than before.

You can help us by ordering THE BLACK CAT and buying it regularly at the same stand each month and if you like the magazine (of course you do or you would not buy it) just put in a good word with the newsdealer and ask him to display THE BLACK CAT where it can be readily seen by others.

It is our endeavor to improve the magazine with every issue and you can assist us by telling your friends about it and asking them to buy it regularly of their newsdealer. The larger the circulation grows, just so will the magazine grow.

How Great is Your Mother Love?

IS IT limited to your own son or sons who are now in khaki?

Or is it great enough to extend to a million, two million other boys like him who are ready to give up their lives for you?

You have knitted for those dearest to you; have written them letters of cheer, and have sent them many little presents which will contribute to their comfort.

Don't forget the others. You can show your thoughtfulness for every one of them.

Every woman of America, whether married or single, must rejoice in aiding the work of the Y. M. C. A. overseas.

For it is the work of "mothering" the boys —not coddling them, but looking after their real welfare; keeping their spirits high and their courage strong; giving them the nearest possible substitute for the home life they have left; ministering to their minor—but still important—needs; and reminding them of the gratitude and affection of those for whom they are fighting.

And their sense of the *Appreciation* on the part of their countrymen and countrywomen of what they are doing is, though an intangible thing, one of the greatest facts in maintaining morale.

They feel that they are not forgotten.

The Y. M. C. A. supplies them with free entertainment, music, lectures, theatricals; it supplies free writing paper and reading matter; it gives religious services of non-sectarian, non-propagandist character; it offers instruction in geography, history, French, and English and other subjects; it helps the convalescent; superintends and encourages clean sports and athletics and furnishes the means of engaging in them; and it conducts all post exchanges, at which the lesser necessities may be had at the lowest prices.

In giving to the Y. M. C. A. you are "mothering" every soldier abroad; strengthening his body and spirit and helping preserve in him the ideals and standards for the preservation of which he himself is fighting.

THE MOST YOU CAN GIVE THEM IS
LESS THAN THEY ARE GIVING YOU

Four allied activities, all endorsed by the Government, are combined in the United War Work Campaign, with the budgets distributed as follows: Y. M. C. A., $100,000,000, *Y. W. C. A.* $15,000,000, *War Camp Community Service,* $15,000,000, *American Library Association,* $3,500,000.

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THE BLACK CAT

CALL IT A DAY

By FREDERICK J. JACKSON

To improve the not very salubrious atmosphere of Tres Picos and uplift the moral tone of the town, Big Dog and Little Dog combine their intellectual and physical forces and elect themselves to the office of sheriff for the period of their sojourn there.

IT was springtime in Arizona. A meadow lark perched on a telegraph pole near the summit of Gunsight Pass and raised its voice in song, then flew away at the approach of two horsemen. The latter likewise felt the poetry in the air, and began the twenty-seventh verse of their "private" song. Their voices, however, were stronger on lung-power than harmony. An honored institution of the west is a private song, and woe betide the man repeating a verse of it in the hearing of the authors. This particular ballad recited the tale of a woeful hermit, new verses being added from time to time in moments of inspiration:

"This hermit man only had one shirt;
He lived on nature's plan,
And wore his shirt on Sundays—
This *dawg-gone* hermit man."

Thus ran the twenty-seventh verse, with both voices exerting themselves on the italicized word.

The songsters reached the summit of the Pass, and started to descend. An odd pair they were, whose friendship for each other rivaled that of Damon and Pythias—at times. Though no blood bond existed between them, both were named Smith. One was two inches over six feet in height and weighed a miserly two hundred and twenty-five. The other stood a bare five feet in his high-heeled riding boots and was unable to budge the hundred-pound weight when he stood on a feed scale. To differentiate between these two Smiths, the larger had been nicknamed Big Dog, while Little Dog was the name by which the other was known.

The teamwork of this pair was a thing that men used for a simile. No matter what either one of them said, or started, the other usually agreed to it, or stepped in with a helping hand to complete the job.

Itinerant cow-punchers were they, hying, when the wanderlust grew too strong, with their accumulated wages to the nearest town, there to invest their funds in celluloid wafers of different colors. Following this they would pit their judgment against that of the townsmen in bettering the balance of power, as represented by a hand of five playing cards. The game is sometimes known as "five-card insomnia."

If the goddess of luck had perched on the shoulder of either of them all men within hearing were invited to put a foot on the rail. This formality over, they immediately left the town, to pass on to the next and repeat the performance. Sooner or later, however, luck would fail them. In this event, still happy, though broke, they would ride out to offer their services to the nearest outfit.

Three iron-clad rules they followed: never to remain in one town more than twenty-four hours, never to risk gambling away their horses, and never to leave a town on the same road by which they had entered. Happy-go-lucky, irresponsible, congenital lovers of trouble, they had covered five states and territories in their wanderings.

Thus they rode down from the reaches of the Sierras Blancas through Gunsight Pass and into the town of Tres Picos. Twice before had they strayed through Tres Picos, but two years had elapsed since last the dust of the single street had been stirred by the hoofs of their horses. Eager-

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ly, now, they looked for changes in the town. There were only two.

One was a new frame building bearing the sign: "Mrs. Dunnigan's restaurant." Beneath the latter was a smaller notice: "Java and doughnuts better than mother used to make, 25 cents."

"Gosh, the old town's building up, ain't she?" observed Little Dog.

"She sure is!" agreed his partner, removing his dusty hat and bowing flirtatiously to a woman, evidently Mrs. Dunnigan, who came out and stood in front of the restaurant. "Peachy looking dame," he commented in a hoarse whisper.

"She sure is!" chimed in the other.

Next, they came to Captain Jim's saloon, "The Sheltering Palms." Outside stood a long hitching rail. For a decade it had been there, its forty-foot length furnishing food for thought to the teeth of hungry and restless bronchos. Several times had Captain Jim been forced to replace the railing, for the horses chewed it away. But now, the partners noted, it was protected by a coating of tin along its entire length, tomato cans beaten out flat and nailed to the wood.

"By golly, Captain Jim is there with the right civic spirit," spoke Big Dog, dismounting to inspect the rail as he tied his horse, "he always did believe in municipal improvements."

"He's sure there!" agreed the other. "But hurry up, for I'm sure nursing a cottony thirst."

They climbed the short flight of steps to the wide porch, and passed in through the inviting doors. Captain Jim was behind the bar. Eight men stood in front of him, while three others were sleeping in chairs tilted back against the wall.

"Howdy, boys!" Big Dog greeted the room at large. "Come on and name it!" The shattered mirror behind the bar caught his eye. The pride of Tres Picos this mirror had been, and Big Dog voiced his amazement at its condition.

"Yeh!" replied Captain Jim dolefully; "we been putting up with a lot since you boys were here last. What this town needs is a marshal or a depity sheriff. A gun-man blew into town 'bout a year back —Slaughterhouse Flanagan. Ever hear of him?"

"Sure; he got clear of a manslaughter charge in the Big Bend country—but a committee run him out afterwards," vouchsafed Little Dog.

"Huh! He may have got run out of the Big Bend country, but he's runnin' Tres Picos to suit hisself. What this town needs is a—"

Captain Jim broke off in the middle of the sentence to warn them with a frowning nod towards the door.

The partners turned, as Flanagan of the bloody nickname came swaggering in, notched gun-butts projecting out of holsters that were hitched conspicuously forward on either thigh. Stepping directly to the bar alongside of Big Dog, he reached for the glass of whiskey that the latter had just poured for himself. Half-humorously, half-contemptuously, he glanced at the larger of the Smiths, then raised the glass towards his lips.

The next few seconds were full of action. In all his adventurous career Flanagan had never known so much to be concentrated into so short a time. Little Dog started it before his partner could recover from his amazed stupefaction at Flanagan's nerve. From behind Big Dog's elbow he nonchalantly tossed the contents of his glass into Flanagan's eyes, then made a flying leap for the gun-man's arm as it dropped down to his belt. Then Big Dog awoke. He swung an uppercut to Flanagan's jaw, a clean knockout.

Five seconds, declared Captain Jim, was the time from when Flanagan lifted the glass to when he skidded down the front steps into the dust, bereft of his guns and his dignity.

"A bottle of beer," ordered Big Dog, returning to the bar. "I don't care much for whiskey, anyway. Here,"—he handed over Flanagan's guns—"drop them into your cleaning water till we get out of town."

"Beer for me, too," said Little Dog; "whiskey's the bunk!" Then out of sheer exuberance, he started the twenty-eighth verse of the lay of the woeful hermit, and was joined by Big Dog:

"This hermit man he struck it rich,
Ten dollars to the pan.
He bought himself another shirt—
This *dawg-gone* hermit man."

"That beer's on me," Captain Jim insisted. "As I was sayin', what Tres Picos needs is a depity sheriff or a marshal. But no one in town cares to bump up against this Flanagan *hombre.*"

"Huh!" snorted Little Dog. "That yellow streaked four-flusher! Hey, Big Dog, le's be the sheriff as long as we're in town."

"That's us!" was the enthusiastic response. "We ain't never yet found a galoot who could make us take water. And there's no person in this town who can!"

"You're sure stakin' out a hard claim," stated Captain Jim, a note of admiration in his voice, nevertheless.

"Aw, that ain't gonna amount to anything," returned Big Dog lightly. "I said there *wasn't a person* in this town what could buffalo *us*!"

"No sir, there ain't!" seconded his bantam partner, nursing his bottle of beer. In partaking of this beverage Little Dog disdained a glass.

"*Stick 'em up!* you big sheep-livered coyote!" It was Flanagan's voice. A colt in either hand, he stood just within the doorway. Apparently he had failed to recognize Little Dog as the one who began the offensive, for he centered both guns on Big Dog.

The latter raised his hands aloft. There was nothing else to do, at the moment, for he realized that Flanagan would welcome any untoward move that would give him an excuse to shoot. Lacking that Flanagan would not dare, for the sentiment of the town was already against him, and deliberate murder would have been the last straw. Taking them singly, he could intimidate any man in town, but a vigilance committee was a different matter.

Both guns forward, at the level of his hips, Flanagan walked toward Big Dog. Foolishly he ignored Little Dog as a factor, for as he shoved one gun into its holster and reached for Big Dog's weapon with the hand thus freed, he presented his back to the smaller of the Smiths.

What he lacked in size Little Dog more than made up in nerve. Bing! Both hands on the neck of his beer bottle and both feet clear off the floor as he leaped, Little Dog broke the brown glass over Flanagan's head, crumpling him to the floor.

Immediately the tension was broken. Captain Jim guffawed hoarsely, together with exclamations and unmistakable sounds of joy from the other occupants of the room. A moment before the room had been grimly silent, except for the shuffling footsteps of Flanagan as he advanced.

"Too bad you broke the bottle. Here's another," Captain Jim offered. "And there's half a dozen more waitin' the pleasure of your thirst. Neat work, Shorty, neat work!"

"Yeh, he's makin' a reg'lar jackass of himself, ain't he?" Little Dog questioned mildly, reaching for the proffered bottle.

"You said it, old timer!" exclaimed his partner. "Jackass is right! Got a halter or a bridle?" he demanded, turning to Captain Jim.

"Sure! There's a bridle in the back room," was the puzzled reply.

"Trot it out!" Big Dog knelt and removed Flanagan's gun-belt.

Under the astonished and delighted gaze of the onlookers the partners proceeded to force open Flanagan's mouth and place the bit between his teeth. As securely as possible the bridle was fastened on his head; then the hilarious pair carried the unconscious gun-man out through the doorway.

Fifteen minutes later when Flanagan regained consciousness he found himself lying in the dust and hitched to the tin-covered rail. When he recovered his wits and somewhat relieved his throbbing head by bathing it in a watering trough, black murder seethed in his heart. In no other way than by killing the perpetrators of this outrage could he maintain his reputation in Tres Picos. Never a thought of consequences entered Flanagan's inflamed brain at the moment; nothing was there but a burning desire for revenge. This time, he vowed, when he entered The Sheltering Palms, both hands would be smoking.

In the meantime the habitues of Captain Jim's place were livening up; and their horseplay was far from subtle. Finally, after the pool table had been overturned, Big Dog developed one of his whimsical moods regarding his partner.

"Now see here, Little Dog," he declared, "this ain't no place for you. When things dust up a little more you may get tramped on. And you're such a little half-portion that there would be nothing left but a stain on the floor. It's because I love you so much, you little son of a gun, that I want to get you out of here."

"Aw, you big stiff, where would you be right now if it wasn't for me? Huh! answer that! Didn't I save you twice? And how about the time down in Phoenix! Why, you big ungrateful hunk of tripe, you ain't got brains enough to take care of yourself." Little Dog's indignation had been worked to an intense pitch because of his partner's untactful reference to his size.

Big Dog looked pained. "To think," he mourned, "that we've been cavortin' around together for five years, and now you're trying to quarrel with me. Tell you what I'll do: I'll compromise. See that ledge up there—" he pointed to a broad shelf some eight feet above the floor and directly over the doorway—"I'll hoist you up there where you'll be safe from the hoofs. And look at that stuffed cougar up here—you can ride him bareback."

"I'm with you," agreed Little Dog mollified to a certain extent, "but, you big stiff, you gotta pass me up another bottle of beer whenever I holler for service."

"Fair enough! Up you go!" And Big Dog tossed his diminutive partner up onto the shelf.

Little Dog was content. Seated with a bottle of beer in his fist, from his perch he had a grandstand view of the hilarious bunch. When things grew a little slow he invented another amusement, namely, to lift his heel and see how much hair he could scratch with his spur from the neck of the stuffed cougar.

"Come on now, boys," coaxed Captain Jim, coming around from behind the bar. "This ain't right, and you know it. Straighten things up a little for me." He appealed to Big Dog. "See if you can't get some of the boys to help you tilt that pool table back into place. First thing you know some of you will be squealing because it ain't level when you want to play on it."

"Sure they'll tilt it back. I'll ask them to," was the good-natured response; then he obtained the assistance of several others.

It was while Big Dog was bent over, straining at the heavy table, that Flanagan again burst into the room.

Bang! He announced his coming by sending a bullet through the already shattered mirror back of the bar. "Hoist your paws, you doggies!" he yelled. "I'm here to let daylight through a couple of skunks."

Big Dog straightened up with a jerk, reaching for his Colt. He was on the wrong side of the table, otherwise he could have ducked behind it. As it was, he was at Flanagan's mercy.

Flanagan fired again, at Big Dog, intending to get him, but the bullet struck the far wall near the ceiling. Flanagan's aim and intentions had been rudely spoiled by a little man armed with his favorite weapon, a beer bottle, who came flying down upon him from above. Again was the hard-headed gun-man knocked cold; again was he disarmed.

"Wonder where he gets his guns?" propounded Captain Jim. "He must have stocked up a regular arsenal. What yuh gonna do with him this time?"

"Nothing," answered Big Dog, except kick him out into the dust again. I ain't gonna stop the fun. I'm kinda curious to see how many times this galoot will keep trying. He's mighty thick-headed, but he'll begin to take a hint right pronto, I hope."

"Hey, Big Dog, when do we eat?" complained his partner.

"Anytime, you sweet little bottle juggler! Come on, we might as well scoff now."

Outside, they paused and flipped a coin to decide which of them would tend to the horses. Big Dog lost the toss, so Little Dog ambled alone down the road toward Mrs. Dunnigan's restaurant. Entering, he perched himself on a stool at the counter,

then glanced at the bill of fare for the day, chalked on a blackboard hanging against the rear wall. On nails alongside the board hung several six-guns, with certain sums chalked below each one, indicating how much the owner of each revolver was in arrears to Mrs. Dunnigan. Here, according to a western custom, credit was established by a man handing over his gun.

Little Dog gave his order, then stared interestedly at Mrs. Dunnigan, who, though carrying a few pounds overweight, was not hard on the eyes.

"Stranger in town?" she questioned as she placed the dishes before him.

"Yes, ma'am," replied Little Dog, then added impressively, "I'm the new sheriff."

"Indeed! I'm glad to meet you, Mister —Mister—"

"Smith," he supplied.

Then Big Dog entered the restaurant. "Afternoon, ma'am," he said, shying his hat at a nail in the wall. He smiled his prettiest at her, but she ignored it. Unabashed, Big Dog slid onto a seat and proceeded to order everything on the menu as his idea of a modest meal.

As she began to spread the dishes in front of him she repeated her formula: "Stranger in town?"

"Right the first time, ma'am. I'm the new sheriff. Smith's my name!"

"Indeed!" There was amusement and decided skepticism in her tone, while Little Dog glared at his partner. For the second time that afternoon there threatened to be a rift in their friendship.

A third person entered the restaurant at that moment.

"Indeed!" repeated Mrs. Dunnigan; "and you, too, Aloysius Flanagan, I suppose your name is Smith and you're the new sheriff—with all those guns you borrowed from me. I want them back before their owners happen into town."

Then she caught sight of the blood streaming down Flanagan's cheek. "Oh, you poor boy!" she exclaimed, hastening to him. Lifting her apron she wiped the blood and dust from his face. "What's happened? My poor Aloysius, tell your sweetheart what—"

Not until that moment did Flanagan see the pair perched on the stools at the counter. Wholesome fear registered immediately on his face, and he began to back towards the door.

Mrs. Dunnigan was quick to catch the significance of the look and the retreat. "Are they the ones?" she demanded.

Flanagan nodded fearfully as he disappeared through the portal.

Eyes snapping belligerently, arms akimbo, she came back to the Smiths.

"You *big* brutes!" she screamed in wrath. "Did you *dare* to hurt my beau?"

"Well, ma'am," began Little Dog apologetically, "you see, he didn't play the way we did, so he happened to get roughed up a bit."

She answered by making a strategic flank movement that brought her behind the counter amid the cooking utensils. Immediately came the attack, opening with a barrage of shrapnel in the form of a crock of hot beans. Smash! It struck the counter in front of Big Dog, then cracked. The larger piece of the broken crockery ricochetted off the counter, struck him just above the belt and knocked him from the stool. Little Dog, too, was within range and received a liberal spattering of the spray of hot beans and sauce. Hurtled a frying pan from behind the counter. Big Dog arose to his feet just in time to stop the handle with his neck.

Little Dog, busily engaged in picking beans from the open front of the collar of his shirt, stood in one spot a fraction of a second too long. Contrary to the current belief that a woman cannot throw accurately, Mrs. Dunnigan was in a class with Walter Johnson. She had next laid her hand upon a beet, a large, boiled beet, ready for slicing. It struck Little Dog squarely on his left ear. If you do not know the effect of a boiled beet upon a person's ear, try it some time for yourself. The outside layer smashed; the rest was too solid, and the combined result caused Little Dog to hastily retreat outside, his head ringing.

Big Dog followed a scant second behind, just as a pot full of boiling coffee struck in the doorway and spilled its contents at their flying heels.

Ten minues later, still hungry, the part-

ners were riding out of Tres Picos. Following their usual custom of leaving a town by another road, they did not find it necessary to pass again by the restaurant. For this they were secretly thankful.

"Gee," spoke Little Dog regretfully, "we didn't get any action at poker."

"Aw, what's the difference? Let's call it a day, anyhow! We sure got plenty of other action."

"Yeh, we sure did. Golly, that dame is a wild-armed terror!" Little Dog chuckled at a certain recollection. "Remember you told Captain Jim there was nobody in Tres Picos who could buffalo us?"

"That was what you might call a grammatical error. I meant there was *no man!* No two-laiged male person is in the class of that she-devil!"

"Yeh, I'm sure satisfied, too, to call it a day. I don't care much for Tres Picos nohow."

"Sure, it's a rotten town." The partners were in harmony again.

"And Mrs. Dunnigan's doughnuts—'better than mother used to make'—Huh! I'll bet they're not what they're cracked up to be."

"Sure, they're not so much. I'll bet we're better off without them."

Then Little Dog, in the flood tide of inspiration, raised his voice in alleged song:

"This hermit man ran out of beans,
And lost his frying pan.
I'll go down to Tres Picos, says
This *dawg-gone* hermit man."

"By golly, if he does," said Big Dog, "I hope he doesn't mix with Mrs. Dunnigan. She has beans and frying pans to spare."

"Wait a minute and I'll put that in another verse," replied his partner.

THE GIRL AT THE LUZON

By HARRIETTE WILBUR

Bughan, an Igorrote bride, insists that a human head is a necessary decoration for her new home; but the reluctant bridegroom is so far from being convinced that he soon sickens of Bughan's line of attack.

BUGHAN stood beside a large luzon of molave wood, threshing out rice. In time with her pestle strokes, she droned a simple native threshing song. There were only three notes in the melody, yet it was musical, like the buzz of the bee or the hum of a mill.

The Igorrote girl did not know that when the Philippine fathers selected a great seal for their territory, they honored her and her work by placing a woman and a luzon on the stamp. She did not know what a great seal is, or that there was such a thing in all the island. She probably would have recognized the luzon, and the smoking mountain, in the design, but never herself in the radiant young goddess holding the pestle so lightly, as though just freed from the necessity of using it.

Bughan had already spent several years threshing rice. She expected to spend her whole life at it, as did all peasant women. And she found it hard work, too. She seized the pestle with both hands, brought it down squarely on the hard grain, and took advantage of its rebound for the next blow. Chief Fomoalay often scolded her roundly for dallying at her work. Had she ever taken the easy pose of the young woman in the great seal, he would have sent her off without more ado.

Neither did Bughan work in flowing garments. One scant, soiled skirt, and a short, sleeveless jacket, were all she ever wore during working hours. Of course, on feast days, she donned all her best clothes. But here, in the rice-paddies, what did it matter how she looked? In her work-a-day garb, she compared favorably with her fellow workers.

She ceased her song and her rhythmic pounding to empty the shallow mortar of the cleaned rice, dishing it out with cupped hands into a deep bamboo basket. She made sure that Chief Fomoalay was not near, and paused to rest and look about.

A dozen or more of the tribesmen were working with her. Some stood alone at a single luzon—a shallow mortar dished in one end of a large, up-standing log of molave wood. Others worked by twos and threes at either side of a large block, alternating their blows. All plied their pestles in unison, their brown bodies gleaming in the bright sunshine. And most of them, as they labored, hummed the three-toned rice-field song of the tribe.

On beyond, tier upon tier, stretched Chief Fomoalay's rich fields, where a new crop of rice was just heading. Here and there above the green grain rose thatched platforms, where noisy boys were frightening off the hungry rice-birds. Bughan had worked these paddies in all stages of the crop, from the flooding and plowing and planting to the reaping and harvesting and threshing. Yet she did not know that in all the world there is no handiwork more wonderful than these Igorrote rice terraces in the mountains of central Luzon.

So a sweeping glance about, more to locate Chief Fomoalay, than to admire his lands, was all she gave the scenery. Her gaze rested longer, if more shyly, upon Umahog, her nearest neighbor.

She had no sooner looked his way than her heart began to beat joyously. He had put aside his pestle, to prepare his buyo quid, and she anticipated the opportunity she had been seeking. She stealthily watched his every move.

Umahog shook the straight black hair from his eyes with a toss of the head which made his earrings jingle. He lifted the tiny rattan pocket-hat on the back of his head and took from it a small woven purse. This he opened and took from it several articles which he laid along the edge of his luzon—some slices of areca nut, a few fresh betel leaves, a tiny round box of lime dust, a flint and steel, some dried tobacco, a pipe, a small ball of tree cotton, a steel fishhook and a length of twine, and lastly a smooth pebble somewhat larger than a bird's egg.

He coated one of the bright green betel leaves with a sprinkling of lime, wrapped it around a small piece of areca nut, and popped it into his mouth. Then he packed the contents of his purse, and while doing so brushed the smooth pebble off the luzon. This charm, for such it was, rolled along until it stopped near Bughan's basket. In an instant, she had it secreted in her ear.

Umahog did not raise his eyes from his work, until he turned to spit the blood-red juice of his buyo quid. Then Bughan saw him give a sly glance her way, and his great black eyes met her own. Her young heart beat exultantly. By appropriating something of his, she had tacitly given him an opportunity to propose. And she was assured, from his expression, that he would claim his valuable charm without delay.

Bughan caught up some fresh sheaves of rice, and spreading the heads out over the shallow mortar, she seized her pestle and began working as industriously as though her speed would hasten the close of the day. Chief Fomoalay waddled by, puffing his pipe, and nodded his approval.

"Good! A measure of camotes shall be yours at the end of the threshing, if you always work so well."

Bughan knew the baknang intended to reward her industry with yams because they are less marketable than rice; indeed, she had but little faith in the promise. But she kept busily on for all that, always with one eye on Umahog and the other on the sun. It had no sooner touched Mount Mayoyao than she dropped her pestle and started for the village. She did not care to wait for the company of her fellow workwomen, and it would not have been proper for her to wait for Umahog.

She hurried to the large hut at the far end of the village, where she lived with the other maids of the barangay, under the care of Chief Fomoalay's mother. She donned her best camisa and a long skirt, : ll her beads and rings, adorned her black hair with flowers, and painted her eyes and nails. Then she took her weaving frame out on the grass, and, without seeming to do so, watched eagerly for Umahog.

At last he left the council house at the other end of the village, where all the unmarried men dwelt. And how fine he did look, in his red and white striped feast-day camisa, his yellow shawl, his jewelry! He walked like a chief along the grassy path, and Bughan's heart glowed proudly that her man should be the finest and handsomest one in the whole barangay, even if he were a peasant. She found but one flaw in him. He did not wear on his breast the tatooed emblem distinguishing a successful head-hunter. But, and Bughan nodded her dark head sagely, she would demand an offering of a head all in good time.

The other maidens of the barangay gathered about the door to observe the wooing. But Bughan sat calmly weaving and yet seeing Umahog's every step. First he passed haughtily by his fellow lodgers, who were tossing spears at a human figure painted on a board, and noisily betting pebble currency on the results. Bughan rejoiced that Umahog could rival the best of them at spear throwing, and could wield the bolo as well. How easily he would win the head she should demand for the new home!

Past the goldsmith's hut he came, where that old artisan crouched beside a firepot of stones, molding the waxen model of another great earring for Chief Fomoalay. Bughan thought enviously of the chief's wealth, and sneered at remembering the ragged strings of ear lobes he was so fond of decorating. Past the spear-head maker's he came, where the old head-hunter, his tattooed breast testifying to his valor in battle, sat smoking his tiny gold-bowled pipe and chanting the two-toned

war song of the tribe; past dogs and naked children rolling and tumbling in the tall cogon grass; past a score of beehive huts, whose owners squatted about a tiny campfire in the center of the barangay, smoking and chewing and gossiping.

Now, Umahog was very near, passing Chief Fomoalay's house. The baknang had the largest and finest home of all, and its outside walls were the envy of the tribesmen, being decorated with hundreds of skulls of pigs and dogs, the trophies of many a feast and celebration. In the midst of them, on a shelf over the door, were seven human skulls. Some of the other huts showed a skull over the doorway, the spear-maker's, for instance, but none had so many as the chief. As Bughan remembered this prized ornament, she began planning anew just where and how she would use the head Umahog should bring her.

Umahog marched straight up to her side, not heeding the titters of the other girls. He extended his hand confidently.

"My anting-anting," he requested politely.

"No, no," Bughan laughed, and to tease him she buried her hands deep and shook her black head wilfully.

"My anting-anting," repeated Umahog firmly.

The other maidens giggled and whispered, and Bughan laughed mischievously, prolonging the ceremony.

"No, no!" she denied.

Umahog gave her one piercing look. Then, throwing his head nigh, he turned haughtily away. Seeing this, Bughan quickly drew the charm from its hiding place in her ear. Gravely she laid it in Umahog's hand, watching his face anxiously. What if he did not speak to her, but went silently back to the other end of the barangay! Then she would be shamed before all the other maidens, and they would taunt her unmercifully for being so jilted.

Umahog lowered his eyes to hers, and smiled slightly.

"Look," he exclaimed, graciously, pointing to the red-gold sky above Mount Mayoyao. "To-morrow's sunrise will be fair."

Bughan smiled with delight, the other maidens silently withdrew, and the lovers were alone to continue their auspicious courtship.

The next morning, Umahog awaited her at the end of the barangay, as was proper and fitting, now. They walked side by side to the paddy, chattering as gaily as two mated birds. Umahog brought his pestle over to Bughan's luzon, and all day they worked happily together. They paused so frequently for shy confidences that Chief Fomoalay frowningly warned them more than once that they must work better, if they expected pay for their services. But they were too happy and absorbed in each other to be alarmed by the old chief's threats, and paid but little attention to him.

In a few days, the good chief gave a great feast in honor of the Maestro Americano from Bontoc. Umahog and Bughan, however, instead of joining the throng which greeted the teacher's arrival, spent the day building their new home, as busy and happy as two newly mated birds. First they cut cocoanut palm timbers for the corner posts, bamboo for the framework, and bejuco rattan for tying them together. Then they sided it with nipa-palm leaves, and thatched it with cogon grass, and the building was complete.. No architect's plans were consulted, no contractors employed, no carpenters engaged, no decorators or furnishers called in. This pair of lovers was perfectly capable of erecting their own house, though neither had ever built one before. And like a termagant hen-bird, Bughan scolded and fretted happily all through the work and insisted on doing the major part, though she did stop frequently to place her nose and lips on Umahog's cheek and sniff him lovingly.

At last, she pronounced it finished, and entirely satisfactory, thinking to herself that the head Umahog was to bring later would fit nicely into the little gable over the low door. She had arranged a place for it

The next day, they left the village for a five-day honeymoon in the deep forest, as a formal commencement of their year of trial marriage.

Then, when they moved into their new home, Bughan demanded a head as a trophy of her husband's skill and bravery.

"Look at Chief Fomoalay's house," she directed. "They have seven skulls. And many of the taos like us have one. It is my right, and you shall bring me one, at once."

"But," protested Umahog in dismay, "I am not under the debt of life to anybody of kin."

"Long ago your father was killed in a raid of the Banao men," insisted Bughan.

"But my uncle paid the debt when I was still a child."

And Umahog patiently told just how his uncle stole into Banao one day in the season of the blooming of the fire-tree, and lay in hiding at the spring until one of the tribesmen of that barangay came for water; how he poised his spear carefully over his shoulder, holding it far up the handle, took good aim, and struck the man full in the back; how he pinned the man's head to the earth with his pronged bamboo shield, severed it with one stroke of his bolo, and brought the bleeding trophy home in his rattan head-basket.

"And you will see the very same head for yourself, if you will but look over there at my uncle's house," concluded Umahog.

Bughan knew all this, but it made her furious to be denied. Since his uncle had cheated her of her rights, all Umahog could do was to go forth and waylay some tao or carrier of the Banao tribe, and bring her the head.

Umahog refused. He was a peaceful tao, and would not kill without good cause. The house looked very well just as it was. Let others have their heads, if they liked, that was no reason he should go head-hunting. One never could tell when he would have to go, until then, the house was well enough.

The more he objected, the angrier and more insistent Bughan became. Then Umahog grew stubborn; he hung his head and would not speak to her. Finally, Bughan scornfully taunted him about a certain young tao who would gladly have done whatever she asked. At this, Umahog gave her a long, searching look; then without a word he took his bolo and spear and walked out of the hut.

"Ah!" Bughan rejoiced, "I knew I could make him go."

And, laughing to herself, she began arranging her few possessions about the new home.

Umahog did not return that day, and when the next morning Bughan went alone to the rice-field she boasted to the other women that Umahog had gone head-hunting for her. She even told them, laughing triumphantly, how she had forced him to go.

The second day he was gone she began to plan just how lovingly she would reward Umahog upon receiving his gift. When many days went by, and he was not back, she began to worry and fret. She worked silently and watched anxiously for the first sight of Umahog coming out of the forest. At the end of a month she was filled with fear and doubt; she had not a word for any one, nor would she listen when the other taos tried to talk with her. When two months had gone by, her utter misery overcame her pride, and she asked Chief Fomoalay about him.

Why, didn't she know? Umahog had gone to America, or so said Clemente, the Igorrote servant of the Maestro Americano. He went long ago, but that was all Chief Fomoalay knew about it.

The next day, carrying a gift of camotes on her head, Bughan went down into Bontoc to see Clemente. She found him busy in a little room he called his "keechen," but he gladly told her all he knew. Yes, Umahog had come to the Maestro two months ago, and said he wanted to go to America with the band of Igorrotes that was being taken over there to the great festival. The Maestro had given Umahog a letter to the Americano in La Trinidad who was taking the men over, and that was the last they had heard of him. Oh, yes, he was there by this time; he would reach the great festival in a month, the Maestro had said, the great festival, for all the world, at San Francisco.

Bughan silently took up her empty basket and started back into the mountains.

Once she stopped, and sat for a long time under a great palm, her head resting on her knees, heart-sick and suffering. Once she left the path, intending to lose herself in the deep forest. But a love of life, and still stronger maternal love, overcame her grief, and she turned back toward the barangay.

So the days passed, and Bughan spent each one toiling hopelessly on at the luzon. Even on feast days she was there, for she had no heart to enjoy the frolic and merriment the other laborers welcomed. She was wretched and wanted to be left alone. She never sang, she never talked, but stood swinging the heavy wooden pestle as silently as a machine. If the taos spoke to her, she would not answer, and they soon left her wholly to herself.

Bughan helped to thresh Chief Fomoalay's new crop of rice, and another and another, until after two years had passed, a sixth crop was ready for the pestle. Bughan worked at her luzon, thinking of Umahog. She had long ago given up hope that he would ever come back, but she thought of him always and wondered where he was and what he did. She lived in the little hut they had built so happily, though it was not adorned with the skull she had coveted. She was not alone there, for she shared it with a tiny lad whom she called Magama—a name meaning "father and son united."

At Umahog's luzon worked the very peasant she had taunted him with. She could never look up now that she didn't find this tao watching her, and she had grown to hate him intensely. He could not force himself upon her, only annoy her. By bearing a child to Umahog within their year of trial marriage, Bughan was entitled to the full privileges of a married woman, as long as her husband lived. But even had she been childless and free, Bughan would have remained true to Umahog. She loved him and wanted no one else in her life. As she recalled the day he had gone way, she felt a deep humiliation and self-hate. She bitterly repented her ambitions to have a house as fine as others; she said to herself that if Umahog would but come back, she would never ask another thing of him. Nothing else mattered now.

Suddenly, she became aware of a commotion among the workers.

"Look! look!"

"How fine! Ah, how fine!"

"The grand Americano, ah!"

They were all staring and pointing toward the village, and when Bughan peered about the others, she discovered the cause of their excitement. It was a grand Americano, much finer than the Maestro, coming down the paddy.

The Americano, when he heard their exclamations and saw their interest in him, hurried on. But even when Bughan saw his face plainly, it was a full moment before she recognized him.

"Umahog! It is Umahog!"

Filled with wonder and joy and fear, she clutched her pestle in both hands and leaned breathlessly against her luzon.

What a grand Americano he was, dressed from head to foot in white clothing like the Maestro's, only much finer! A camisa of bright red, a purple neck-string, a shining hat, bright yellow shoes, and his hands thrust deep into pockets just like the Maestro's! Ah, how fine! And then he smiled, and his teeth sparkled like gold! They were gold! Above and below they were pure gold!

Then the others knew him.

"Umahog! It is Umahog!" they shouted, and crowded merrily forward to greet him.

But Bughan shrank back behind her luzon, fearful and shamed. What if he had come back to taunt her? Surely, such a grand Americano would never look at her, so dirty and poor and careworn! And their quarrel; how he could laugh at her now, and shame her before all the taos! What was he saying to them now?

"How do?" he called in Americano tongue, and he jingled some coins in his pocket—oh, much louder than the Maestro's ever jingled!

Then he lifted his hat, as they had seen the Maestro do when he came to the village, and Umahog bowed as graciously as he.

"How do, you rubes?" he asked, showing all his golden teeth in a beaming smile. "Has anybody here seen Kelly?"

No one understood all the fine words Umahog had addressed to them. But they did realize the wealth and assurance he had acquired on his travels. Even Chief Fomoalay was impressed, and greeted him with the deference due a man of such attainments. Bughan saw all this, and her heart died within her. How he would scorn her! She longed to hide from him, and crouched behind the rest that he might not see her.

But soon Umahog discovered her. Bughan could not escape his eyes; she could only shrink back behind her luzon and stare helplessly into his face.

Then he smiled! Such a wonderful smile, so brightly did the double row of gold teeth gleam and flash! And how kindly he looked upon her!

He left the others, and coming over to her, took the heavy pestle from her hands.

"Come," he said gently, in the native tongue. "No more you work at the luzon. We go now to America, where no one works at the luzon. We go to the Coney Island where no one works at all, and each day is a great feast day. There we make much money, for thousands of Americanos come to see us toss the bolo and the spear, and many, many pieces of money we get in a day."

Bughan had only a vague idea of how that could be—a life-long feast day. But she did know, with a great rejoicing in her heart, that Umahog had come back, that he was not angry, that anywhere with him meant happiness.

"Yes," she said penitently. "And I do not want the head, ever."

"Oh," Umahog laughed kindly. "In America, no one ever takes the debt of life. Instead, they take money—heaps and heaps of it."

Bughan nodded happily. Then she suddenly remembered, and stooping down, lifted up a little brown baby that lay sleeping in the shade of her luzon.

"Look, your son!" she said, her heart thrilling proudly as she presented Magama, feeling quite certain that her gift would be equal to all he had brought her.

She handed the boy to Umahog, and smiled to see his wonder and delight as he gazed down upon the fat baby body.

Then she took her pestle from Umahog's hand, and as she turned to place it on the luzon for the last time, she faced directly toward America, that wonderful land of opportunity. She accepted her emancipation without regret, and her pose had the unconscious dignity of the woman in the great seal.

ANOTHER story by *Harriette Wilbur* will appear in the December number. It is called MERT THE MURDERER, but is not strictly a Gyp-the-Blood story, as the title would lead one to suppose. Mert is a good-natured medical student about to enter upon his "cadaver year." His one worry is that cadavers seem to be off the market; and while his method of procuring one might seem extreme, it does not indicate a predisposition to crime.

TRIANGULAR FINANCE

By A. L. CRABB

As Mr. Dude Sweeney would say, crooning to the lady of his choice: "The excursion comes on apace. I would for your companee." Others entertain the same sentiment, which so stimulates the need for funds that the money market at Hilltop is unusually active.

DOGGONIT all, why couldn't that boat excursion be next week instead of this?" inquired John Brown, editor of the *Crater*, the monthly exponent of the student body of Hilltop, as he walked rapidly away from the bulletin board. "Just announced, and for Saturday, too! Four days! Now can you beat that! Oh, doggonit all!"

You can see plainly that the worry germ was nibbling merrily away at John's vitals. He had five dollars, but he wanted ten. Let him explain why as he addresses the bricks of the sidewalk.

"Who'd have thought about that excursion being this week! I would have that money from home by next. I wonder if there ever was a boy at Hilltop who failed to take his girl on the annual boat excursion. I'd just like to know that, I would! Five dollars to take Mary Layman on the excursion with! Five dollars! Now, wouldn't that jar your grandma's blackberry jam! I suppose it could be done, but who wants to be a miserly tightwad, anyhow! Who wants to take a girl like Mary to the wharf in a crowded old street car when a taxi isn't half good enough for her! Who'd like to say: 'Mary, look at the nice chewing gum I've brought!' Yessir, that'd be about my size with five dollars! And, if the street car should break down, I suppose I'd say: 'Don't mind it, Mary; it isn't but two miles to the wharf, and we can walk; we need the exercise anyway.' Five dollars! I'll have ten if I have to sell my vote, rob a bank and ditch a train to get it! Oh, doggonit all!"

Upon maturer deliberation, Brown adopted a plan which steered clear of criminal devices. He chose the ancient expedient of making a "touch," a method that doubtless was old when the patriarchs were young.

He knew that the money market at Hilltop, while usually tense, tightened with a jerk at the approach of the boat excursion. He was fully conscious that the successful engineering of his plan demanded finesse of a fine quality. After some mental balloting, he elected Cicero Lutes, alias Hot Air, as his victim. Then, he thought deeply in terms of finance.

Hot Air Lutes, captain of the Hilltop baseball team, and would-be orator, sat in his room immersed in an ardent perusal of "Gems of The World's Oratory." Hot Air was a tiptop baseball player, but hopeless as an orator, but like many another, he estimated his talents in the reverse order. There was a rap upon the door, and John Brown entered the room. Somewhat bewildered by the high honor of being visited by an editor, a senior, and a personage of renown all rolled into one, Lutes slipped on his shoes, kicked some soiled linen under the bed, and bade his visitor sit.

"Hot Air," said the Personage, "I came to talk with you about that speech you made on 'Temperance,' the other night before the Neocomian Society."

"Yes," said Mr. Lutes, filled with throbs.

"I am right, am I not, in assuming that you composed that speech yourself?"

"Every word—"

"I thought so. I was a great speech. How many words does it contain?"

"Eleven hundred and seventy six, but what—"

"Approximately twelve hundred. About four columns, I should say."

"'Four columns,'" murmured Lutes, a great hope taking form in his mind.

"I shall be perfectly frank with you, Hot Air. That speech was too valuable a contribution to oratorical annals to be lost. I have come to ask you for the manuscript so that if possible I may run it in the *Crater*."

If an angel, driving in a chariot of fire, had stopped at that moment and asked Hot Air if he would like to ride up, he would have replied:

"No, thank you; drive on, please."

"If I decide to use it," continued the editor, "I shall want the copy by next Monday, at the latest. Or, couldn't you let me have it by Saturday? I could go over it then, and get it ready for the printer by Monday."

"Yes, sure, but, look-a-here, Saturday's the boat excursion."

"Oh, I know it," replied Brown, several coats of deep gloom appearing on his face, "I know it well enough, but I cannot go, cannot go."

"Is your work that fierce?" asked Lutes wondering.

"I shall be frank with you, Hot Air, perfectly frank"—a dramatic pause—"it isn't the work. I simply haven't the money. I shall get some next week, but now I'm broke, that's all. The subject is painful, Hot Air; let us dismiss it. Is that speech in typewritten form?"

Hot Air's shoulders sagged under a great responsibility. "But, Brown, I—"

"We will not discuss the matter further. Disappointments come to us all; I can bear mine," affirmed the editor, bravely; "now, about that speech—"

Again Hot Air ignored the subject, however dear. "Brown, I'd just be glad to lend you that money."

"I thank you, Hot Air, but I couldn't think of presuming that far. Twelve hundred words, now, let me see—"

"But, Brown, as a favor to me, let me stake you for that trip."

"If you put it that way, but, no, I—"

"I insist," insisted Hot Air. "There isn't any friend of mine going to miss that excursion if I can help it. Will a five spot take you?"

"Ordinarily, I should refuse to accept a penny, but from you only, Hot Air, I will accept five—no more."

"Glad to do it. I'll hand it to you later."

As the editor passed down the steps, he winked to himself and said:

"Now, am I not the human nature expert? Still, the flesh is pretty weak, particularly Hot Air. I'll play safe by not taking the matter up with Mary until I hear that five a-rustling in my pocket. He ought to cough up sometime to-morrow."

We will now leave editor Brown for awhile, and observe the deliberations and operations of Hot Air Lutes, captain of the Hilltop baseball team, and would-be orator. When the editor of the *Crater* had departed, Mr. Lutes sat for some time adjusting his faculties to late developments. Then he addressed the furniture:

"Well, I guess I'd better be up and doing as the poet says. Me, lending a helping hand to a bankrupt brother, the boat excursion on, and the sum of $4.60 in my jeans. Shucks, Brown isn't so stuck up after you once know him. Now wasn't it lucky he came to see me. It would be a low down shame if he couldn't go on the excursion because he didn't have the money and was too proud to borrer. I bet he will want my picture to go with that speech. Well, since I'm in the relief fund business, I'd better be showing some signs of activity. Now, I wonder how Dude Sweeney is healed with spondoolix. What do you know about Slick Lay being called home yesterday? That sure looks good to me." The tender dreamy look of springtime came into Hot Air's eyes, and he continued: "Yes, sir; and if I raise that five for Brown, I'm going to take Mary Layman on that excursion with that little four-sixty of mine. She is a good sport. She's got sense. She knows that a fellow that hasn't got a good profession yet can't blow himself much on a girl. Well, on your way, Hot Air, on your way. The early worm catches the bird, as the saying goes."

Jefferson Sweeney, alias Dude, stopped in answer to a hail from behind. While

waiting, he flicked a film of dust from his shoes, and adjusted his tie. Sweeney's actions were, in main, motivated by two instincts and one idea. His instincts were: to preserve an immaculate exterior, and indulge in theatricals at every opportunity; and his idea was in the form of a burning ambition to play on the Hilltop baseball team.

"Howdydo, Sweeney," said Mr. Hot Air Lutes, falling into step beside him, "that was some swell practice you put up with the scrubs yesterday."

"Why, were you there?" asked the flattered Mr. Sweeney. "I didn't see you."

"Oh, yes," cheerfully lied Lutes. "It's my business to scout around. You see, the team is all the time needing new material. A sudden resolve seemed to strike Hot Air: "I shall be perfectly frank with you, Dude. Slick Lay had to leave yesterday, and second base has to be plugged up. I've been thinking since I saw you in action that I'd ask Coach Craig to give you a chance at the place."

Compared with the thrills Sweeney was experiencing, the thrills of requited love would have to be hunted for with a seismograph.

"Oh, Mr. Lutes—" he murmured.

"Yes, I think we'll give you a chance, and if you show the goods, it's Slick Lay's uniform for yours. Could you come out Saturday and practice with me?"

"Why, yes, sure; but, why, Saturday's the boat excursion."

"So it is, Sweeney; so it is. But the boat excursion is nothing to me, nothing at all to me. I'll not deceive you, Sweeney; I'll be perfectly frank with you. I invested in a set of orations last week and it left me high and dry. If I had known that the excursion would be this week I wouldn't have bought it. I have some money coming in next week. Of course, you are going on the excursion, Sweeney. Excuse me for mentioning practice for Saturday. I'd forgotten for the moment. Could you come out for practice on Monday?"

Sweeney was on the verge of renouncing the excursion, but a happier thought occurred to him.

"You don't care for the excursion, Mr. Lutes?"

"Care for it! Why Sweeney, I'd rather lose my eye teeth than miss it. But let it pass. I shall pay for my extravagance alone, and in silence."

"You won't do anything of the kind," announced Sweeney with sudden and strong determination. "You are going on that excursion if I have to pawn my jewels to get the cash."

"Thanks, old man; but I couldn't think of troubling you—"

"Trouble! It would trouble me if you should refuse to accept it. I'll slip you a V to-night at supper."

"Since you put it that way, I'll accept it gratefully. I shall depend on you for practice Monday."

As Hot Air walked away he winked complacently to himself. In fact so pleased was he with the trend of things that he continued winking at brief intervals until he reached the boarding establishment of Ma Reynolds where roomed Miss Mary Layman. Ma answered the ring.

"Want to see me?" asked Ma.

"Why, no," said Hot Air, "I'd like to see Miss Layman, that is, if you're willing," he added, making concession to the militant air which Ma always manifested in the presence of strange young men.

"I'm willing," said Ma, grimly. "I'll see if she is."

Miss Layman, at that moment was receiving Miss Dollie Gabbert in her room.

"I just dropped in," explained Miss Gabbert, "to talk about the excursion."

"Isn't it fine?" asked Miss Layman, heartily.

"Just lovely. Do you know that Elbow Thomas wrote me a note in chapel and asked me to go with him. Don't you think he's awfully forward?"

"I don't think he ought to write notes in chapel," observed Mary, critically.

"I don't either—to other girls. You're going with John Brown, aren't you, Mary?"

Mary flushed painfully. "There hasn't been anything said about it."

"Well, if that snail doesn't arrive pretty soon, somebody else will."

Mary's flush deepened. "No, they won't either," she stated positively.

"I do hope," said Dolly, with splendid indifference to tact, "that John will ask you. I want you to go so much."

"I don't think I'll go. I've got to work."

"Gentlum t'see Miss Layman," announced Ma from the door.

"It's John," said Dollie joyfully. "These old slow pokes do finally get there. Run on down to see him, dear. I've got to go now."

Even a poor observer would have noted the disappointment that was portrayed on Mary's face when she beheld her visitor.

"Why, hullo, Miss Layman. I thought I'd drop around to see how you were."

"Did some one tell you I was sick?" inquired Mary.

"Sure not. You're the very picture of good health. That's something everybody ought to have, too, good health."

"If you'd make a doctor, maybe they would," suggested Mary.

"I may. I'm thinking something about it. I kinda believe I could do better in politics though."

Miss Layman considered the statement. "It's fine weather," she said finally. Hot Air heartily sanctioned Miss Layman's meteorological observations.

"You couldn't beat it, and it is getting finer all the time."

"Did you want to see me about something, Mr. Lutes?"

"Yes," said Lutes, "I want you to go on the boat excursion with me."

This was lightning from an unexpected quarter. "Oh, no; I don't think, I guess—"

Hot Air jumped at conclusions. "Oh, I see. You've got a date. Now isn't that fierce?"

Miss Layman chose to let his assumption stand. "You mustn't fail to go though, Mr. Lutes."

"Oh, I'll go, all right; but I wish I'd have seen you first. Well, so long, I got to hit the sidewalk, now."

"I half way believe that was a narrow escape," mused Hot Air, as he left. "It wouldn't surprise me any if she's a high flyer. I don't believe four-sixty would make much of a hit with her."

When Lutes had made his touch and departed en route to Ma Reynolds', Dude Sweeney assembled small items of change from various parts of his person. These, he audited:

"Four-fifteen," he announced, "By my troth, if I can but raise a quintet of bones for Lutes, Mary Layman will fix my lunch for the excursion. Aha," he continued, speaking to the limestone veneer of the walk, "if I'm any sort of prognosticator of signs Editor Brown is about due to cough up."

Brown was in the editorial sanctum that afternoon wrestling with a poem turned in for publication by Miss Pansy McClure of the sophomore class. The poem opened thus:

And now, the birds, and beasts, and flowers
Are doing all within their powers.

The further developments of the poem were such as to require Brown to do all within his powers if the poem were to merit space in the columns of the *Crater*. The job seemed hopeless, and he welcomed the tap on his door as a relief. Mr. Jefferson Sweeney, alias Dude, entered.

"How doth the busy little bee?" inquired Mr. Sweeney somewhat airily as he located his hat and cane upon proper hooks.

"I'm devoting my time and talents to the fine art of making bad poetry worse," sighed the editor. "How goes it with you, Sweeney?"

"Quiet, quiet, me lord; but there'll be something stirring anon. There's a switch brewing in the line-up."

"Do these spells come often, Sweeney? The general line of your conversation indicates an overworked mind."

"What we shall see that shall we behold. Meanwhile, let us hearken unto facts. Every morning, in my native hamlet, when the householders open their front doors they see a morning paper lying out on the grass. Sometimes they go out and pick it up and read it. The star reporter of that sheet, to wit, the Mayfield *Blade*, will hike for unknown parts next July. It's a dandy job; a cool fifty per, and a fine old place to live in. A certain father of mine with whom I am influential somewhat is owner of the *Blade*. Newspaper work is, I un-

derstand, the dream of ye editor. Do you begin to gather the drift of my discussion?"

Brown's power of self repression forced some struggling emotions back under cover. "Only vaguely," he said; "but I'll admit that the subject seems very much like one that interests me."

"Sure, it interests you all right. Here is the matter in a nutshell. First, the job exists. Second, the most promising eligible who has swooped down upon my field of vision is the renowned editor of the *Crater*. Third, my opinion as heir and assignee of the boss ought to have some influence. Would you like the job?"

"Does Rockefeller like cash, or Teddy fame?" asked Brown, feeling that his implied similies were weak and colorless.

"Good!" exclaimed Sweeney. "I shall write to the pater about your Saturday."

"Not Saturday, Sweeney. You'll be going on the excursion then."

"Shut up, can't you! I can't hear anything, it seems, but that old boat excursion. Every fellow I meet lines out a chant about it." Here Sweeney negotiated an artistic change of tone and countenance. "No, I'm not going on the excursion. I can't go; but I'll beguile the lonely hours away by writing to father about you, Brown."

"But, Sweeney, why—"

"I shall tell him that you are clean, vigorous, optimistic. Those are the things that he is strong for. And, Brown, I want you to come up to my room Saturday evening when you get back, and tell me all about the excursion. That will brighten things up for me a bit."

"Why aren't you—"

"Because I haven't the money," broke in Sweeney. "You are a friend of mine, Brown, and I shall be frank with you, perfectly frank. I blew me to a guitar last week, and my paternal stipend isn't due until next. Now, if excursions were worth a cent a thousand I couldn't buy the ink to print a single ticket. A guitar is a regular vampire, a siren, a bloodsucker," he continued, developing righteous indignation, "and this one has drained my heart's blood and left me a-gasping."

It is said that the mind of a drowning man covers a vast deal of territory. There are, to be sure, other conditions which encourage nimbleness of the mental faculties. While Sweeney was relating his tale of woe, Brown's mind was very active. The ambition of a lifetime seemed in a fair way of being realized. Boat excursions were transient, fleeting, sweet experiences that lasted but for a day, then gone forever. But to live in the columns of the Mayfield *Blade*, to infuse one's ideals and personality into his constituency, to chase a flying pencil across reams of paper to make and to unmake, that were far better. Years later he would tell Mary of the excursion which he had sacrificed. "Dear John," she would say, "you did exactly as I would have you do." Having renounced the excursion, he took a five dollar bill from his pocket, and passed it to Sweeney, saying:

"Here, you siren devastated mariner. Take this and go on that excursion. Suppose you write your father to-night."

Fifteen minutes later, as Dude Sweeney passed down the stairs leading from the editorial chamber, he winked with evident self-satisfaction in the general direction of Mr. Dude Sweeney. Presently, he found himself occupying a seat on Ma Reynolds' front porch, Ma having been dispatched to summon Miss Layman. Mary's heart fluttered, and love's young dream dwelt in her eyes as she came down the stairs. At last, John had come to arrange for the excursion. She would prepare a luncheon for the excursion that would be a revelation to John. She knew what he liked. Once, in her presence, he had remarked that in point of desirability among edibles chicken salad led all the rest, and she had treasured the saying in her mind. John should feast on chicken salad to a satiety on the excursion. "Let's see; shred finely the flesh of two boiled fowls, add chopped celery—"

"Ah, maiden fair, good afternoon," said Mr. Dude Sweeney.

"Oh, all right," answered Miss Layman, dully.

"How flit the fleeting hours with you?" asked Dude.

"Did you want to se me?" she asked.

"Even thus. The excursion comes on apace. I would for your companee."

"Oh, Mr. Sweeney, I don't think—I guess —no—"

"I see. I witness. I comprehend. That being the case, I'll hie me away. Congratulate the lucky chap for me."

"The excursion only announced for this morning," communed Dude with himself as he walked rapidly toward town, "and this claim staked already. Believe me, but these are forward days. Maybe, it were better so. Four-fifteen. Embarrassments might arise. Let others take what course they will, but give me freedom, absolute freedom on excursion day. Still, I'm glad I asked her. It makes 'em feel good to be asked."

Miss Dollie Gabbert was not one to sit idly by pending the adjustment of any matter in which she felt an interest. At eleven, Tuesday, she again visited Miss Layman in her room.

"Has that speed demon showed up yet?" she asked.

"Has what?"

"Why, John; has he come around to see you about the excursion yet?"

"I haven't seen him. I couldn't go anyway. I'm not up with my work. He might have come when I was out."

"Work nothing! I wonder now if he's too stingy to go."

"Of course, he isn't. He must have come when I was down town yesterday. I couldn't go anyway."

"I think," said Dollie, "that I'll go around and see John myself, and find out what's the matter with him."

"If you do I'll never speak to you again." Mary spoke sharply, and the tears showed in her eyes.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, honey. I wasn't a-meaning to meddle."

"I know you weren't," said the repentent Mary. "I reckon I'm just nervous."

"I do hope it will come out all right. I must go now."

"Wait a minute, and I'll walk as far as the drug store with you."

"Good morning, ladies," said John Brown, encountering them at the crossing.

"Here is where I depart for parts unknown," said Miss Gabbert, turning promptly down Main Street.

John fell into step beside Mary, and they walked along in silence, both self-conscious and painfully ill at ease.

"How are you?" asked John lamely.

"Quite well, thank you," responded Mary coldly.

John wondered vaguely why Hot Air had not contributed the five he had promised. If he had that five he would ask Mary to accompany him on the boat excursion. Mary was a sensible girl. She wouldn't expect to go in state. He could make out splendidly on five if Hot Air would only come across.

Shorty Cooper, strolling down the street, passed them. Both were so abstracted as to permit Shorty to pass unnoticed. Shorty's democratic soul rebelled at such treatment.

"Hey, you," he called. They stopped and faced about.

"I just wanted to say," said Shorty, "that I just bought me the smoothest little kodak over at Hilltop, this morning, and I want to use it on you two on the excursion. Sorter try it out, you see."

"Why—" said John.

"I can't—" said Mary.

"Yes sir," Shorty went on, "if that picture taking machine of mine won't take you right, you're just not right, that's all. Say, you-all going, aren't you?" An awkward pause ensued. Shorty eyed them narrowly. "Cause if you don't go, you'll miss—"

John's vertebræ stiffened. "Sure, we're going," he said.

"John!" exclaimed Mary.

"We're going," he reiterated. "You catch that first street car Saturday morning, Shorty; we'll be on that, and we'll look that kodak over then."

Shorty went on down the street.

"John!" exclaimed Mary.

"Yes, Mary," lied John, "I had just started over to see you about it. It's all right, isn't it?"

"I wasn't expecting to go much," replied Mary feebly, "I'm not up with my work."

"Work, nothing! You get ready for that excursion."

"If you want me to go that much, John, why, all right."

"Oh, Brown," called a voice from a window of a house which they were passing. They paused, and presently Hot Air Lutes issued from the front door.

"Hello, Miss Layman," greeted Hot Air. "Hello, Brown. I just wanted to shake hands with you. Place it here, old man."

Somewhat puzzled, Brown extended his hand. When Hot Air withdrew his a five dollar bill remained. Brown nodded his gratitude.

Hot Air stood watching the retreating figures.

"I wonder now," he said softly to himself, "I wonder—" He broke off shrugging his shoulder, took a manuscript headed TEMPERANCE out of his pocket, and lovingly fingered its pages.

At the same time, Mary was saying to herself:

"Shred finely the flesh of two small fowls, add chopped celery, and—"

An Essay From France

Essay of Gaston Picquet, 11 years old, who was asked to tell about his evacuation and under what circumstances he was received by the Comité Americain.

In 1914 I lived with my mother in the village of Vaurezis near Soissons. After the Battle of the Marne we were in the German lines very near the front. Then the Germans began to evacuate our village.

One day we received the order to be ready to leave.

Mama hurried to put the most necessary things in a bag. And at ten o'clock in the morning we took the road, on foot, to Coucy-le-Chateau—a distance of 20 kilometers.

When we arrived in this place the Germans put us into a train of cattle, and we left the train near Guise.

We stayed there three months. We were not well fed there.

We ate black bread and decayed potatoes.

We had two fagots of wood for six days.

Fortunately the Germans repatriated us to France through Switzerland.

We stayed only one day in Germany, where we ate beet root and slept on straw in a prison camp.

We were well received by the inhabitants of Switzerland who gave us every thing that we needed.

In France we were sent to St. Agnan (Saone et Loire) where we stayed nearly eight months.

From there we went to Lucy-le-Bois in l'Yonne.

In 1918, in the month of February, profiting by a German retreat, we returned to Vaurezis.

We found it very much changed. The houses were nearly all destroyed. It was very sad!

We lived there in the midst of French soldiers; we began to cultivate the land.

The 4th of April I found a shell in the court of our house. I picked it up without thinking of any danger and it exploded in my hands. An auto from the French Red Cross took me immediately to Soissons to an ambulance hospital, then to Vierzy because at Soissons shells fell every day.

At Vierzy I stayed two months. Two fingers of my right hand and three of my left had to be cut off.

While I was at the hospital my mother was evacuated to Drome.

A lady from the Comité Americain came to get me in an auto. She sent me to Coyolles to their colony. There, surrounded by good care, I recovered quickly from my wounds.

(*Continued on page* 35)

A TALE OF TWO SHADOWS

By ERNEST ELWOOD STANFORD

An unhealthy rivalry between two young men brings about a condition where one is in danger of being the victim of mob spirit. The intervention of an old storekeeper shifts the climax.

OME folks say Mollie Bemis is the prettiest girl that ever trod shoe-leather in Aspidium township. I'm not so sure—I'm a married man. But in forty years—I guess that's safe—I haven't seen her like. Tall and slender and straight, blue eyes, red cheeks, dark hair—a streak of Irish somewhere, I shouldn't wonder—the look of youth, the heart of truth, the— Pshaw! What business has a fat old storekeeper with sentiment and the description of pretty girls? But when it's one that's lived next door to you all her life, one whom you've helped bring up, her mother being dead and her father, good man, knowing little of children save their needs in Quaker Oats and gingham dresses, well, you get sort of—partial, especially if you've no chicks of your own.

And Charlie Birch—lots of people had an equally flattering opininon of him. He had the looks—tall and broad and straight—the figure of a man we'd all like to be, and never to outgrow. Dark hair with a curl in it, dark eyes with a flash in 'em—the girls all looked when Charlie passed—and so did he, when a mirror was nigh. People said they were cut out for each other. Why I thought different I don't know. It was quite plain what *he* thought about it, and he'd had everything in this life he'd wanted, from the cat's tail as a youngster to a sniff of whiskey now (as I suspected) without getting scratched by either or anything, so far as anybody could see. And while they weren't regularly engaged—things aren't quite as formal here as in some places—most of the other fellows admitted Charlie had the inside track, and the older ones had presents all looked up in the mail-order books.

I asked Ma one day if she thought that match was made in Heaven.

"Who says it's made at all?" says Ma.

"Folks," says I.

"Folks are fools—sometimes," says Ma.

"Frequently," says I. "And I'm thinking serious of breaking up that match."

"Well, you know who 'tis that rush in where angels fear to tread," says Ma. "But I reckon you won't rush very fast. You're too fat."

After folks have been married forty-odd years they frequently get quite candid. Some don't wait that long.

"Mebbe," says I. "Even so, I step pretty heavy when I do rush."

"So I've noticed," says Ma. "And a young girl's heart ain't a pretty thing to step on, Ezra Todd."

"I ain't going to step on it," says I, and maybe I spoke pretty short. "I don't intend anyone else shall step on it, either."

And the more I looked at the prospect the more I didn't like it. But as for actually interfering—what could I do? I'd have said I could be as frank with Mollie as with an own child; but, hang it, what was there to be frank about? Just a blundering old fool's suspicions and notions? I couldn't pin a thing on Charlie. It was clear enough to me that he'd been better for more touches of his nametree in his youth, but that's nothing remarkable in a young man of to-day. It occurred to me that he bought more than his share of horsewhips, a funny thing, you'll say, for the storekeeper that sold 'em to find fault about. I suspicioned he took a drop of liquor now and then, but 'twas only a suspicion.

And then Henry Lloyd arrived.

Henry—I came to call him that and might as well begin that way—Henry was a summer boarder. When you've said that about a fellow you've generally said enough, but Henry wasn't cut off the usual piece. He didn't come in to buy cigarettes and then get mad because I didn't keep 'em, nor he didn't swagger in and ask for charlotte russes or caviare or pomme de terres nor any of those other foreign dewdabs that some of 'em like to ask for to see what I'll say—confound 'em. Generally they find out. Nor he didn't flash around in a shiny automobile, killing chickens and scaring horses. Nor he didn't stand on the street corners and make remarks about—and to—our girls whom he didn't know. And when he went to church, as he did occasionally, he didn't act like he was there to see a country circus, or to snicker at the music. And he didn't treat our folks like they was some new and inferior kind of foreigner, nor tell us what a lovely time we must have living so close to the heart of nature. Nor he didn't holler over spending a cent, or throw money about like it grew on his family tree.

Now there's a whole lot of things Henry Lloyd didn't do. As you look 'em over, they don't seem strikingly unusual, or you might think, mark him off from any other reasonable body. But they're what struck me most, and most favorably, about Henry Lloyd. He was just human, that's all, and didn't appear to act, or think, or feel himself, different from anybody else, for all he'd been brought up in the city and had a college education.

His looks weren't much less ordinary than the rest of him. He was a passable chap, with passable honest features and an honest blue eye. He'd never attract attention, like Charlie Birch. He was a quiet voiced fellow—Charlie was apt to bluster at times—but for all that you could see he had a will of his own, and a won't if he needed it.

I suspect perhaps if Charlie hadn't kicked up his heels about that time, and shown his freedom by taking one of the Langren girls to an ice-cream supper, Henry would never have got very far with Mollie Bemis. She'd seen city fellows before, goodness knows, and knew how to manage 'em. But what was fair for Charlie was fair for her, and she acted accordingly. When folks began to see Henry on the Bemis piazza they talked quite a bit, and most of the comparisons they drew didn't favor Henry. According to all the books, and particularly to the movies we have in the town hall every Saturday night, Henry's intentions couldn't possibly be honest, and most folks was dead set against the interloper who would rob the honest son of the soil of his bride. I didn't feel just that way about it, though I couldn't but feel that my feelings was sort of disloyal to a fellow townsman.

Folks did say that Mollie and Charlie had words about him. Anyway, Charlie was in a mighty ugly mood; and I begun to suspect more and more about the whiskey. But nobody else appeared to think of such a thing, so I kept mum.

They met by chance one evening in my store. Charlie bustled up to him, red-faced like a turkey gobbler, and says he, "I'll trouble you to keep away from Mollie Bemis, Mr. Man!"

There was quite a crowd standing by, and Henry paid just as much attention to Charlie as if he'd been in Senegambia.

"I'll take a box of that same candy I had yesterday, Mr. Todd."

"D'yer hear what I said?" snaps Charlie.

Henry reached into his pocket to pay for the candy. Charlie grabbed him by the shoulder and spun him round.

"I said, keep away from Mollie Bemis or I'll break your head off," says he. And he begun to cuss and swear and tell what else he'd do. When he let go, Henry paid for his candy and went out without a word, all the fellows laughing at him. Out by the end of the store, out of sight of Bemis' house, he stopped and sat down on a box, folding his coat up and laying it aside careful. Nobody noticed him but me. Charlie stayed inside and blustered and blowed till I told him to shut up or get out—both, if he'd just as soon. He was pretty huffy at me then, but I was

too old to hit, so he went along. Most of the other fellows had gone. He was quite surprised, I guess, to find Henry waiting for him.

"Do you think it's proper to bring up a lady's name in public the way you did just now?" says Henry. "I fancy you need a lesson in manners."

"You—fancy—do you——you—blankety blank-blank," says Charlie, and cuts loose with a wallop that would have landed Henry in the next county if he'd stopped it. But he slipped out of the way, quicker'n I ever see anybody move before, and a telephone pole behind him got the benefit of the blow. At least, it got a good deal more benefit than Charlie's fist did. Then Henry lifted one of *his* fists, and Charlie's feet flew up and his head flew down and he sprawled out in the road like a load of buckshot had hit him.

"No, he's not killed," says Henry, when I come running out. "His hand's probably broken somewhat, and it's possible he's bitten off a piece of his tongue. There's plenty left, I fancy."

I pumped on Charlie's head and he went home sadder, and wiser in some respects.

That summer a lot of some kind of foreign woodchoppers—Hunks, or Hunkys they called 'em—were clearing off a wood lot for Zeke Tripp's steam mill. They'd been there all winter, rather a rough lot, drinking a good deal of beer and having some pretty high doings among 'emselves, but never had bothered us; and we hadn't troubled about them. But along in the spring before these Henry-Charlie doings took place they began to act different. They'd appear around town drunk at any and all times, instead of tanking up in their shanties on Sundays and holidays, as usual. Some of 'em was mighty sassy, too, and folks soon found out that some one was bootlegging 'em whiskey, though who it was, and how he got the stuff there, was, as the books say, a deep and apparently insoluble mystery. From the results he was getting, we judged he was making a mint of money. Quite a number of unpleasant incidents occurred; and to cap it all, a drunken Hunk met Mollie Bemis in the road through Gordon's woods one afternoon and chased after her, and might have caught her if Charlie Birch hadn't happened along and drove him away. Of course that stirred up a lot of feeling. Charlie and a bunch of fellows went after that Hunk, but he got away. It stimulated a mightly lively interest in the catching of that bootlegger. Folks began to talk of tar and feathers, and some of the younger ones, Charlie especially, weren't going to stop with mild measures like that when they caught him. And there soon began to be leading rumors as to who it was, though you couldn't trace 'em to any source. At least, I couldn't, for I tried.

Then one day Ethan Bemis, Mollie's father, came over to the store with a paper in his hand, a big revolver sticking out of his pocket, and a black look on his face. Ethan is our deputy-sheriff. He banged his fist with the paper down on my counter.

"Look at that," says he.

I looked, and I guess I gopped some. It was a photograph, a pretty good one. It showed a Hunk, the very one that had chased Mollie, holding in one hand a bottle of whiskey—you could read the label—and holding out the other with a greenback in it. And there, with his hand stretched out to receive it, stood—Henry Lloyd! Between 'em was a suitcase, with the lid flopped down, showing it to be full of similar bottles!

"Wh-where'd you get this?" says I.

"In the mailbox," snaps Ethan.

"Who sent it?" says I.

"Blest if I know, or care. It's proof enough, ain't it?"

"It's proof of something," says I, kind of feeble, I guess.

"I'm going to run that fellow down to the county jail before my feelings get the better of me," says Ethan. "I've heard rumors enough that he was at the bottom of this bootleggin' business, that he was connected with a liquor house in the city, but I didn't believe it. But I reckon this clinches him—the soft-voiced, pussy-footed, treacherous varmint." And he called him a lot of other names that sounded a lot worse. "I'm goin' to run

him down to the jail because it's my duty, but for two cents I'd turn this picture over to Charlie Birch and his crowd and let 'em tar and feather him—or lynch him, if they want to. He deserves it."

"Does Mollie know about it?" says I.

"No. But I'll see she does."

All this time I was studying that picture mighty close.

"Ethan," says I, "it strikes me that the fellow who did that bit of photography ought to have some credit for it, but he seems to have been too bashful to sign his name."

"It's good evidence, just the same," says Ethan. "A camera won't lie."

"Mebbe not, but they can be awful unflattering sometimes," says I, thinking of the last time I'd had my picture took. "I've monkeyed with photography myself, some, you know, and that picture interests me a whole lot. Suppose you hold your horses a little spell and let me look into it."

"Not much!" says Ethan. "I'm sheriff, and I'm going to act. If I think about it much longer I'll resign, and *then,* actin' as a private citizen and as the father of my daughter, I—I dunno what might not happen."

"Well," says I, thoughtful, "I'm strong for law and order myself, but something surely ought to happen. I've got some tar in the back of the store, and, like's not, some feathers, if need arises. But, Ethan, I don't know's I ever asked a favor of you before, and I'm asking you now, as a favor to me, and also for the sake of justice, if that appeals to you more, to hold up till night while I look into this. I'll stand responsible that Henry don't get away."

There was quite a bit more fuss and talk before I got Ethan calmed down, but in the end I had my way and the photograph.

I hunted up Henry Lloyd first thing. I suppose maybe a real first-class criminal detective wouldn't have done that, but would have gone round and hunted up some clews. But the time was pretty short and I wasn't right sure I'd know a clew if I saw it, not being experienced in such matters.

"Henry," says I, "where was you yesterday at noon?"

"At Jim Rogers', eating dinner," says he. That was where he boarded.

"And the day before that?"

"Picnicing on Bald-Top. Why?"

"Anybody with you?"

"Sure." And he named off a bunch of young folks, including Mollie. "What's the big idea, Uncle Ezra?"

"And the day before that?"

"Blest if I know. Oh, that was Sunday, and I went to church."

"And Saturday?" That was the day Mollie had been chased.

"Fishing, over at Bidwell's Brook."

And so I chased him back to the Tuesday before, he showing a mighty lively interest in the cause of my curiosity.

"Tuesday?" says he. "I must have been coming home from a tramp up Hardhack Mountain, over towards Zeke Tripp's steam mill."

"Anybody with you?"

"No. Look here, Uncle—"

"Remember anything special about that trip?"

"No. Yes, I do, rather. Zeke blew his whistle about fifteen minutes early. I remember looking at my watch, and setting it ahead, and then all but breaking my neck to get home for dinner."

"Do you remember where you where when you heard the whistle?"

"Why, somewhere up the road near the mill. Say, Uncle Ezra, what's the deep, dark, and bloody mystery?"

Then I found out that he didn't have a suitcase along, and what suit he wore, and a few things like that, he being consumed with curiosity, as the books say, but not getting anything more than a promise I'd tell him all about it later.

Then I looked up Zeke Tripp.

"Zeke," says I, "why'd you blow your whistle before noon last Tuesday?"

"I didn't," says he. "I wasn't there. My Hunk helper did it, and I bawled him out good."

The helper was a young fellow, not a very intelligent looking specimen. I interrogated him.

"No spik Inglis," says he.

"You do fairly well at my store," says I. "Would that help you any?" And I pulled out a dollar bill.

He looked at it quite longing, but "No 'stan'," he says.

So I put another one with it, and he began to look a lot more intelligent. When I'd got ten piled up he was one of the brightest looking fellows you ever see, but still he wouldn't speak.

"All right," says I, putting the money in my pocket. "If you'd rather go to jail than take ten dollars and stay out, all right. I'll go get the sheriff; then we'll see."

I turned away. I hadn't gone two steps when he come running after me.

"Oh, Meester Todd, you giv-a me the mon'. I tell-a you. Meester Birch, he tell-a me blow da wheestle."

"Yes?" says I. "Where was he?"

"Leetle toolhouse," pointing to a little shanty out beside the road. "He wave-a de han', I blow-a da wheestle. Give-a me two dol'."

"Now, where's Mike Polladik?"

He was the Hunk that had chased Mollie.

"Mike, he gone. Boss fire heem Monday. 'Bout Sat'day he go—plenty drunk."

I passed over the ten and went up and inspected the toolhouse. The background outside was that of the picture—no doubt about it. Only the figures and the suitcase were lacking. Then I went home and examined the picture with a magnifying glass.

After that I went and got Ethan.

"We'll go over and see Charlie Birch," says I.

"Are you goin' to tell him about that picture?" says Ethan. "He'll tear that young feller limb from limb."

"I think likely he'll do some tearing," I says.

So we went and found Charlie, Ethan spitting out questions all the way. I didn't tell him a thing. Great detectives' methods vary some little bit when they're tracing out the crime, but when it's done they all act the same. Likely I'd never have another chance, so I meant to do the thing up brown. Charlie was mending a plow. We swapped the usual greetings.

"How much do you calculate this farm's worth?" says I.

"About five thousand dollars."

"You're some little optimist. You'll be lucky if you get four."

"It's not for sale."

"No?" says I. "Ever read Sherlock Holmes, or Nick Carter, or Old Sleuth, or, mebbe, Craig Kennedy?"

"Sometimes," says Charley, with an uneasy sort of smile. "Why?"

"That's a question I've heard several times this morning. When we get through I expect the 'why' 'll be all cleared up, and also the 'what next,' in part. Now I've read considerable little light literature myself, Charlie, but I never did much actual deducing beyond reasoning out the presence of a mouse in a cracker barrel. So you bear with me and check me up if I go wrong. I'll now relate what you did Tuesday noon and afternoon, in proper Sherlock style."

"I ain't got time to listen to nonsense, Uncle Ezra," snaps Charlie, forgetting the respect due what's left of my gray hairs.

A fellow in Charlie's place ain't got any business to call his Nemesis "Uncle." But I let that pass.

"You won't have to," says I, very patient, "unless it's your own. Now sometime last Tuesday morning near noon you was up near Zeke's mill with your camera. You saw Henry Lloyd coming down the side of Hardhack Mountain. You cogitated a spell, in an unfriendly manner. You set up your camera in that toolhouse, pointed through a gap in the boarding. Before your lens you put a little dingus called a duplicator, which covers half the aperture, so that a separate picture can be taken on each half of the plate. You plotted with the Hunk helper at the mill to blow the whistle when you gave the signal. You set down in the toolhouse and waited for Henry Lloyd. When he got within range, you gave the signal. When he pulled out his watch and looked at it, as anybody naturally would when they was hurrying for dinner and heard the noon whistle, you snapped him.

"Then some time after noon, after the

other Hunks had gone back to work, out of the way, you got your friend Mike and your suitcase—*your* suitcase—posed 'em as you thought best, and exposed the other half of that plate. Some days later, you put Mike, who you knew was going to leave town, up to chasing Mollie, so you could do the heroic rescue. And when public sentiment was boiling good against the miscreant who sold Mike the pizen that folks thought made him chase the girl, you planted that picture where you thought it'd do the most good.

"I ain't going into your reasons for doing any of them things; I reckon it ain't necessary.

"But it didn't occur to you that any reasonable man, even an old fat storekeeper, seeing two men in a picture, one with a little mite of a shadow pointing one way, and one with a shadow as long as he was pointing the other, would wonder what on earth the sun was up to; or that a lens would show that Henry Lloyd was holding a watch in his honest hand, instead of holding it out for dirty liquor money; or that an old fat storekeeper, with that same lens, would recognize that suitcase as one he sold you not very long ago.

"And that's why there won't be any more bootlegging going on around here for a spell, and why your farm's for sale. While I ain't a threatening man, nor a prophet, I don't believe it'll pay you to be found around these parts any after day after to-morrow night."

Now, according to all the rules of the book-villians, he ought to have keeled right over, mentally, and confessed to everything, and congratulated me on my smartness. But he didn't—not he. And the things he called me—

"All right," says I, after listening a while. "Just remember that I've sort of suggested your future course."

And I walked away with Ethan, who hadn't been able to get a word in edgewise—if he'd had a word to get.

Very few people know, even now, why Charlie Birch left town so quick.

Mollie says—and I suppose perhaps she knows—that she'd had nobody but Henry anyhow. Perhaps. Perhaps.

THE CRIME OF MR. FIGG

By WEARE HOLBROOK

All ghosts suffer more or less from insomnia; but the average ghost, as Mr. Figg learns, is quiet and determined; when he has accomplished his purpose he subsides and is heard no more.

HENEVER I am hungry I may stop at Mr. Figg's for mutton pie. Whenever I am tired I may sleep in Mr. Figg's little spare room that opens on the garden. Whenever I am lonely I may talk and smoke with Mr. Figg. At least that is what Mr. Figg says.

He is not a philanthropist; neither is he to be my heir. But I have rendered him a small service, which he has chosen to magnify.

He is a marble-cutter, shriveled, indefinitely old. I suspect him of gradual ossification. He seems to have absorbed part of his product; the accumulating years have covered him with a monotonous patina of stone dust. His beardless face, his bald head, his hands, his clothes, all have a bloom that is anything but the bloom of youth. Even his blue eyes seem to have faded to their surroundings.

But there was never a kindlier man; and his daughter will gaze at him with adoring eyes and tell you that he is greater than Phidias, but the world does not know.

It was when I was reading law in the office of Woodle and Wells, that I first saw him. I was often sent out with collections, and occasionally these took me to the shop and stone yard of Mr. Figg. I easily made his acquaintance, in spite of the fact that a collector is generally considered an unwelcome visitor. Perhaps it was because he was lonely; he has neighbors, but these, I understand, are inclined to tap their foreheads when they speak of him.

Often he takes me into the back room of his shop, where to this day are things one can find nowhere else in all the world —horrible things, for the most part. His daughter paints pictures which he frames and hangs on the walls, or did until the walls were completely covered with them. Now they are piled in the corners, almost under foot. Having always lived inland, she has a penchant for marine views—stormy, spinachy seas, and rock-bound coasts garnished with symmetrical sea gulls.

To go from the barren work-room with its calm, gray blocks of stone, into this tiny, kaleidoscopic art gallery, is always a shock. Along the wall is a broad shelf covered with the pollen of the work-room. This shelf bears Mr. Figg's choicest *objects d'art*. There is a little horse in a latticed stable carved from one piece of wood by a sailor, an apparently perfect crystal from somewhere, a portrait of Bolivar done in porcupine quills, a leper's bell, and a sliver of bog-oak which Mr. Figg swears is part of the true Cross, and which he keeps in a laquered box with Fuji painted on the cover. His taste as a connoisseur is catholic in the extreme.

One October morning I stepped quietly into his shop and found him bent over a sheet of drawing paper, employed at the melancholy task—as I learned later—of designing his own tombstone. My heel grated against a flake of granite on the floor, and he whirled about at the sound, his face preternaturally white.

"Oh—I'm glad it's you!" He rubbed the back of his hand across his damp forehead. "What do I owe for, now?"

"This is merely a social call," I assured him. "But why did you jump so, when you heard me? You looked as if you had seen a ghost."

"Ghost!" he echoed, in a subdued tone. "Did you say 'ghost?' Tell me, sir, just

what put you in mind of a ghost? I'm curious to know. Was it something about—this place?"

"Why, no," I laughed. "It simply happened to be the first thing I thought of. That's all."

"Yes, yes. Of course. But there be reasons for most things, if a body stops to figure. Now, tell me, what do you think it was, put you in the mind of ghosts?" and his face wrinkled in a momentary smile, intended to be cozening.

"Well," I answered quite promptly, "I guess it must have been yourself, Mr. Figg—the way you looked."

"Ah, I might have knowed it," he nodded sadly. "But I'm glad for your tellin' me."

"Why?" I asked. Certainly he was deeply moved about something.

"Do you know, young man," he pecked at my sleeve with a chalky finger, "I'm getting ha'nted?"

I laughed.

"My, I wisht I could laugh like that," sighed Mr. Figg, admiringly. "I daresay I haven't laughed for a fortnight. It's an awful feeling, and I expect it will get wuss and wuss. What would you do, sir, if there was to be an ungodly bangin' and clatterin' in your shop o' nights, and never a soul in sight? What would you say, now, if you was to find your tool box toppled upside-down, and the lock 'most wrinched off, and never a thing else touched?"

I didn't know what to say.

"Well, that's what this—ghost does, night after night," he affirmed. "Neighbors is complainin', and I can't sleep for listenin' to noises all the time."

He looked more weazened and haggard than I have ever seen him, before or since. The shop is certainly an ideal place for ghosts, lined as it is with grim tablets, blank and "sacred to the memory of—"

"Mr. Figg," I said, "there is quite evidently something wrong. Now I've had enough experience with ghosts to know that they're very reasonable individuals. A few of them may go about howling, with their heads lopped off, but they merely aren't sure what they want. The average ghost is quiet and determined; when he has accomplished his purpose he subsides and is heard of no more. So what we'll do, is to stay here to-night and find out just what does happen, and why."

Mr. Figg was not enthusiastic.

"No, sir. It's bad business. I think I'm ha'nted on account o' something I done, but blest if I do recall what. No, sir, I believe I'll stay away, if you don't mind. Fact is, I've about decided to move out altogether. These parts been't healthy, though they do say once a body's ha'nted, land or sea makes no difference."

Now Mr. Figg happened to be one of Martin Woodle's tenants, so it behooved me, in the interest of Woodle and Wells, as well as of Mr. Figg, to lay the ghost.

As Mr. Figg would not be persuaded to participate in the laying more than to give me his keys, I began my vigil alone, shortly before twelve, that night. Midnight being the witching hour, I decided that if nothing happened by one o'clock, I should give up and go home.

I brought with me a book of briefs, and settled down beside the lamp that stood on Mr. Figg's desk. But I had not turned half a dozen pages in my book before a gust of wind from nowhere at all whisked the lamp into blackness.

"This ghost," I thought, "is behaving in a truly proper manner." At first I could see nothing, but gradually, as my eyes became accustomed to the dark, I distinguished the interior of the shop by the vague moonlight that shone through the dusty windows. Everything was still; nothing had been disturbed. But my attention was attracted after a moment to noise in the vicinity of Mr. Figg's tool box which stood in a shadowed corner.

As I glanced in that direction I saw a gray figure bending over the box; when I looked more intently, it vanished. A second later I saw it again, but as soon as I looked directly at it, it was gone. Like those bilious pin-wheels that so gaily foretell an attack of indigestion, it seemed always just outside the range of vision. But I found that by twisting my head about and staring out of the corner of my eye, I could keep it in sight.

It was a small, frosty figure of a man in an antiquated dress-suit. A shock of wild, white hair bobbed vigorously as he tugged at the cover of the box. For one of his size, he made a tremendous racket; he reminded me of a little terrier with a bone.

Suddenly he sat down on the box and stared at me. From the front he looked more than ever like a terrier; he had scant eyebrows raised to a height of perpetual astonishment, and bristling side-whiskers. I felt uncomfortable; I wanted to speak, but my voice failed me.

"Your name isn't Figg?" he barked. It was more an accusation than a question.

"No."

"No, of course not," he agreed. "Psychic Research?"

"Well, not exactly," I replied. "I'm here to find out the reason for all this racket, if there is any. What's the matter?"

"Matter? Matter enough!" he kicked the box savagely. "The matter is that this box won't open."

"But why such excitement over this box?" I objected. "There's nothing in it but a few tools."

"That's it exactly! Nothing but a few tools. Judging by the way old Figg has bolted and locked it, one would think it contained the wealth of Midas. I know there are tools in it; I can reach in and feel them, but I can't get 'em out. It's exasperating!"

And to show just how exasperating it was, he thumped his shadowy fists on the cover and flamed with rage. His form grew fairly radiant, and the heat that he generated was so scorching that I feared for my eyebrows.

"If I keep this up," he shouted hopefully, "the bolts will eventually run out of their sockets!"

The air in the shop was painful. Desperately I reached for the keys and threw them at him. They were so hot that they had burnt my fingers.

"Ah, this is better. Now, I know you're not Psychical Research—you're too sensible," he chuckled, as he fitted the smaller key into the padlock. "I thank you, and I'm sure Mr. Figg does, too."

The atmosphere cooled rapidly. Without the slightest hesitation he took a chisel and a mallet from the box, and locked it again. Then, bowing grandly, he handed me the keys and glided away with the much desired tools.

He walked through the solid door as if it had been so much steam. The mallet and chisel, however, struck violently against the oaken panels and clattered to the floor.

The ghost came back, muttering.

"I might have known I couldn't get them through, he exclaimed pettishly, as he picked them up. "I'll have to trouble you for the door key."

I felt that it was time to interfere.

"Those tools belong to Mr. Figg," I said bravely. "Before I let them go, I want to know who you are and what you intend to do."

To tell the truth, I had fears for the safety of Mr. Figg himself. Such an excitable shade might do dastardly deeds with a chisel and a mallet.

"Well," said the ghost, considerably mollified, "I am the late Dr. Constantine Blessing, of Dowe College."

"The author of Blessing's Greek Grammar?"

"The same," he nodded proudly. "You have perhaps read my obituary in 'The Academy?'

"My wife hired this stone-hacker, Figg, to carve a quotation from Pindar on my monument. Well, sir, do you know what that fool did?" He fairly flickered with anger. *"He left the accent off the very first word!* Think of it—disregarding Pindar entirely—no more respect for Pindar than for the man in the moon! Can I rest with a thing like that over my head? Can I have future generations blaming Blessing for the mistake of Figg? I cannot. I am going to put that accent on with my own hands. Unlock the door for me,"—he became suddenly humble—"unlock the door, and I promise—never to come back here again."

There was a note of ineffable sadness in the old man's misty voice, and I felt that the least I could do was to unlock the door.

On the threshold he turned and held out his hand.

"Thank you," he said earnestly.

I reached for the hand, but my fingers closed on thin air, and I saw the chisel glint in the moonlight as he darted down the street. That was the last of Dr. Constantine Blessing.

Leaving the key in the door, I went home. It must have been a week before I had occasion to call on Mr. Figg again. When I did, he was hard at work; he had a shining, new chisel in his hand, and a worried look on his face.

"Well, Mr. Figg," I said, "what's on your mind."

"Mind?" he cried anxiously. "Now how did you come to think o' my mind, I wonder? Do you know, sir, I believe my mind is failin' me? I do. I put things in a place and then I disremember where the place is. See this chisel—brand-new chisel—and the mallet yonder? Both bought this week, sir. Can't find my old ones high nor low Most likely they're in this very room, but God only knows where. It's worryin' to forget that way."

"But how's the ghost?"

"The ghost!" he laughed. "Hasn't been sight nor sound of any ghost since the night you watched up. You scared him away, sir, blest if you didn't. I feel better; I don't feel ha'nted."

He reflected a moment.

"I did have a touch o' the feelin' the other night, comin' from Nicholas Opper's birthday party," he confided. "I went over the hill past the cemetery, and there, mind you, I heard a big bullfrog goin' 'plink—plink—plink,' loud and steady-like—'plink—plink—plink.' Now, never did I hear one in the cemetery before. A bullfrog on a big, dry hill been't natural, that's all. No, sir!"

IN the December number: UNCLE PETE'S WIFE *by F. Roney Weir.* It is about Uncle Pete's second wife, in fact—a wide awake American lady who sees through the pretense of Uncle Pete's relatives when she visits them and they camouflage their prosperity by removing the victrola and the living-room art square. She doesn't overact her part nor let on that she isn't fooled; and not until she returns to the farm in Michigan does she throw the spotlight on the real purpose of her visit.

THE ARRAS OF GOD *by Vincent Starrett* is another December story. With his habit of painstaking attention to detail, a German spy prepares himself to meet any emergency; but one small matter he overlooks. He neglects to read the weather reports before venturing forth.

THE DIM GRAY STREAK

By R. RAY BAKER

Two men are adrift in a boat, with no oars, and no wind to stir the make-shift sail—and rations that would last three days if there were but one man.

THE sun pushed itself over the rim of the sea burst through a cloud, and glared at the life-boat dancing on the deep.

Two men sprawled in sleep on the bottom of the boat. One had on a grimy silk shirt that had once been pink, gray trousers that bore faint traces of a tailor's iron and brown oxfords of the latest mode. The other's habiliment consisted of a blue blouse and saggy pants such as distinguish the rovers of the globe's wet highways.

Dangling indolently from a bladeless oar handle standing upright in the bow. was a coat that matched the gray trousers. It was intended to serve as a sail, but it served not well; for even the best of sails are useless without wind.

For six days they had drifted. Deprived of oars, they had had nothing but profanity with which to urge their frail craft through the seemingly infinite field of tossing blue. Not that they had a destination in view—for they knew not whither they drifted except that the blazing circle in the sky told them it was northward—but they were humans, and humans must keep on the move if for no other reason than the sensation of motion.

The sun shining on his face awoke the sailor. He yawned and blinked at the red orb with eyes that were bloodshot and set in a florid, not unintelligent but rather brutal countenance, which was not rendered more attractive by a week's growth of black bristle. A livid half-moon scar starting back in his crow-colored hair curved down over his forehead, reaching nearly to his left eye.

He sat up and his gaze roved to the west, meeting the horizon. Turning to the east, he discerned an endless, hazy gray streak about two miles from the boat.

"Fog!" he grumbled. "Even that's somethin' for a change. But land! Ain't there land nowhere? A whole week without seein' it—an' nothin' t'eat 'cept biscuits hard as bricks."

He looked sullenly, resentfully at the other man, who had turned on his side away from the sun and was snoring lustily. A hard expression crossed the mariner's face.

"An' there ain't many o' the biscuits left, either," he muttered. "Le'see, must be 'bout fifteen—an' water's scarce, too."

He crept to the bow and opened a locker, from which he brought forth a tin breadbox and raised the cover.

"One—two—three," he counted, peering in. "Yep—fifteen. That'll last jes' a day an' a half, ef we're careful."

He closed the tin and replaced it.

"Jes' enough to last a day an' a half," he repeated, as he seated himself in the bow and cast a baleful look at the coat hanging from the oar. "A day an' a half—fer two men. An'," he added, as that same hard expression crossed his face once more and he looked meditatively toward his companion, "they would last jes' three days fer one."

He reached into his blouse and produced a grimy clay pipe which had only half a stem. From his pants he brought forth a limp tobacco sack, from which he sought to squeeze enough grains to fill the pipe. Only a few sifted into the bowl, however, and with an imprecation he flung the sack and pipe over the side of the boat.

"Now there ain't any smokin'," he said surlily. The sleeper shuddered as though

suffering from nightmare in which the sailor's profanity had a part. The seaman glared at him and the half-moon scar became more vivid. The glare turned to a squint, in which there were malevolence and cunning.

His right hand went into his blouse and reappeared with a long clasp knife. He opened it deliberately and tested the edge over the stub where the second finger of his left hand once had been.

"Only fifteen left," the sailor rasped. "Enough fer two men a day an' a half, and fer one man three days. Maybe enough to reach the coast of South America."

The sleeper was snoring with gusto. The sailor stood up in the boat and it careened. He took a step toward the slumbering man, the knife clutched in his right hand. He paused, then took another step, less firmly. The sleeper, sensible of the eccentric wabbling of the craft, gave vent to a groan and rolled over on his back. The sailor stepped backward and the boat careened again. He dropped into a seat and hastily concealed the knife in his blouse.

The landsman opened his eyes and met the gaze of the seaman, who grinned, but it was a ghastly grin. The landsman smiled pleasantly.

"Good morning," he said cheerily. "Am I late for breakfast?"

The sailor scowled.

"Breakfast!" he sneered. "Soggy biscuits an' stale water—that's breakfast, dinner and supper, and I guess we gotta cut down on the size o' our meals. Say, have you got anythin' left that acts like tobacco?"

The other took a cigarette case from a pocket of his trousers and raised himself on an elbow. He held out the case and the sailor snatched it greedily.

"Hello, what's that?" inquired the landsman, his voice thrilling with a note of hope as he looked eastward. "That can't be land, can it? Or is it a mirage? I don't remember how land looks, it's been so long since I saw any."

The sailor opened the cigarette case. "Jes' one o' these smokes left."

"That's all right," said the owner of the case. "Go ahead and smoke it. I can get along without tobacco. But say," he persisted, "I asked you about that gray streak. Is it possible that's land?"

The sailor found a match and lighted the cigarette. He took a couple of deliberate puffs, then responded:

"Yep, that's what it is, frien'. It's land. It bobbed up durin' the night; and we're gonna be rescued pretty quick—ef we can find some way o' gettin' ashore."

"Looks rather funny for land," mused the other, raising himself to a seat. "I suppose it is, though, if you say so."

The breeze carried the cigarette smoke to his nostrils and he became ravenous for a whiff. His system cried out for nicotine; yet he would not ask for it, because in him, somewhere, almost but not quite smothered by his pampered life, was some of the stuff that men are made of.

"Well, if it's land, how we going to get to it?" he asked.

The sailor inhaled deeply and blew a cloud of white, tantalizing smoke toward the landsman.

"One o' us'll have to swim fer it and bring help to the other," he answered, that squinty expression crossing his face. "It's only 'bout two miles, and a good swimmer can make it easy. How about it, can you swim?"

"Sure, I can. I made quite a record as a long distance swimmer in the club. I don't know, though, about swimming two miles in my present condition, having gone without decent food for nearly a week."

The sailor was silent while he shaded his eyes with a hand and appeared to be measuring the distance to the cloud-like curtain he had declared was shore. Finally he spoke.

"It can't be over a mile and a half. I'd swim it myself, only I can't swim. I reckon it's our only chance—fer you to try it."

The landsman looked thoughtfully toward the hazy streak of gray.

"That's funny," he remarked meditatively. "You've lived all your life on the sea, yet you can't swim. I thought you

were swimming when I picked you up after the *Stella H.* went down."

The mariner took a final whiff from the cigarette and tossed it into the water. The malignant scowl again wrinkled his forehead.

"Well, I can't," he growled. "I was swimmin' when you found me, 'cause I had to or go down, and I did the most natural thing. I couldn't set right out from here, though, and swim a single stroke."

While the derelicts were discussing the prospects of rescue the sun disappeared behind a mass of black clouds that had come up suddenly in the west and charged across the sky.

The landsman looked at the cloud with eyes that expressed doubt.

"I suppose I could swim it all right," he said. "It looks like I'll have to, inasmuch as you can't. Only," he added, "it appears to be getting ready for a storm."

The sailor scoffed.

"It's nothin'," he disagreed. "Ef there's a storm comin' it's fur enough off fer you to swim to shore and send some one out after me before trouble begins. O' course, ef you're afraid—"

The other's eyes snapped.

"I'm not afraid!" he said sharply. "Only I want to live as long as I can. I'll try to make it to land—provided it is land, as you say. But I must have something to eat first."

The sailor produced the tin of biscuits and handed one of the soggy things to his companion, along with a cup containing water that was anything but cool and refreshing.

The landsman ate the biscuit without enthusiasm, still somewhat greedily, and washed it down with the water.

"I could manage to swallow another of those dough-things," he suggested, his appetite unappeased.

The seaman hesitated and cast a surreptitious look skyward, where more black clouds were concentrating.

"Come on with a biscuit," the other insisted. "There's no use hoarding the food—so long as we're going to be rescued."

Grudgingly the sailor provided another biscuit and cup of water, all the time watching the sky and the indistinct streak he had told his companion was land. When the landsman had finished his frugal repast he repressed his desire for a smoke and began stripping, depriving himself of all except under garments.

"Here goes for land," he announced as he balanced himself on the stern of the boat. The sailor sat sullen in the bow, a queer, greedy look in his eyes. The landsman looked dubiously toward his goal and again at the sky. Then he thrust doubts aside and cast himself into the sea.

He got his bearings and set out with slow, easy trokes, seeking to conserve his energy. The minutes passed. More clouds unfurled from the horizon, and thunder rumbled. Lurid, jagged streaks of light darted across the heavens. A strong west wind puffed into existence.

The choppy waves were superseded by long, rolling ones, which mounted higher and higher as time went on. The little boat was hurled high above the ocean at intervals, to fall with a crash. Darkness began to settle, although it was not yet midday.

The sailor shivered, for the wind was raw, and his clothing had soaked up some of the brine that had been washed over the gunwales.

"It's all up with him," he said aloud. "The fog bank has done me a good turn. One less mouth to feed."

THE professor looked up from the book he was reading by the light of a kerosene lamp. Speaking in Spanish, he addressed the dark-skinned girl who emerged from the adjoining room.

"How is the patient?"

"He will get well, father, although he is very weak," was the reply, as she went to the stove and stirred some broth. "He seems to be somewhat delirious, and keeps saying something about a man in a boat."

The professor closed the book, and, rising, donned a raincoat.

"There may be something back of that," the old man asserted. "He was raving about that when I was in the room. At first I thought it was the man's fancy

running wild; for he seems to have gone through a severe experience. He was in a deep sleep, utterly exhausted, when I found him beneath the tree, and he was drenched to the bone. It may be he swam ashore to get help for some one who was caught in the storm. I will investigate."

He lighted a lantern and stepped toward the door of the dwelling, about which the wind was whistling a doleful serenade.

"If there was any one out there in a small boat in this storm it has gone hard with him," he went on. "Perhaps he might have been tossed ashore, however, and I might be able to succor him."

The professor opened the door and the resultant gust of wind all but extinguished the flame of the lantern. He dodged out quickly, slammed the door and made his way down a narrow path through the woods to the nearby shore. A short distance away the towers of the Argentine observatory loomed against an angry sky whenever the lightning furnished sufficient illumination to form a contrast in the inky blackness of the element-embattled night.

"One of the worst storms New Year Island has suffered in years," he mused as he turned his course parallel with the shore, against which gigantic waves were battering. "The South Atlantic gets very spiteful at times, especially this close to Cape Horn."

He had not far to go before his search bore fruit. The lantern disclosed, directly in his course, an overturned lifeboat, beside which was the huddled form of a man. The professor reached down and seized the left wrist, which he held for a moment, then felt for the heart.

"No pulse," said the professor, as he turned the man on his back.

Holding the lantern close to the face of the corpse, he made out a rough, bearded countenance, with a half-moon scar running down from the hair toward the left eye.

The right arm of the dead man encircled a battered tin breadbox.

An Essay From France

(*Continued from page 21*)

We stayed nearly two months at Covolles. But the Boches avions bombarded the district every day. Then the Germans made a new advance.

One of the bombs fell on a train of munitions four kilometers from our Chateau. The detonations followed one another without interruption. We descended to the cellar where beds had been put up.

It was necessary to leave the Chateau where we were so contented.

We went to Paris where we were also bombarded.

And our colony has now been installed in the calm of a Normandy country far away from the front, at Beaumont-le-Roger.

Editor's note: The above essay is published at the request of the AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR DEVASTATED FRANCE, with the object of presenting to BLACK CAT readers the necessity for all Americans to remember that in Northern France those refugees who have been three times driven from their homes are now returning destitute to a devastated land. The committee is not seeking to give merely temporary relief; it wishes to emphasize the fact that it is laying the foundation for a permanent rehabilitation of the territory which the Germans would prefer to keep a desolate "no man's land." The scope of the work is great: including the care and education of children; the reinstating of the merchant, the mechanic and the agriculturist; the medical care of neglected civilians; and the great problem of food raising. Readers of the BLACK CAT who can give either money or time in support of this cause should address the Committee at 16 East 39th Street, New York.

TEMPO DI VALSE

By VINCENT STARRETT

From being in a position where he can hardly hope to borrow more than a thin, rusty dime from a friend, Tempest is suddenly transformed into a "pluted bloatocrat," with the impulse to waltz and money to pay the fiddler.

R. TEMPEST... Mr. H. C. Tempest....Mr. Tempest.."

The diminutive bell-boy in regimentals, than which the uniform of a major general was not more magnificent, shrilled his way across the lobby and headed for the grill room.

Mr. Tempest—Mr. H. C. Tempest—Mr. Henry Clay Tempest, if you please, straightened himself suddenly and held his breath. He was being paged! In his surprise he allowed the gorgeous youth to get a big start on him. He had to hustle to overtake the vanishing crier.

"Hey, boy!" he cried, when near enough to be heard. He endeavored to make his tone casual. The bell-hop retraced the intervening steps. "My name is Tempest. It that the name you called?"

A moment later he retired to the furtive shelter of a huge palm, near the cigar stand, and scanned an envelope curiously. It was quite plain, a common, white envelope. He tore it open with the easy deliberation of a man used to receiving such messages and extracted a paper from within. Whereupon his jaw dropped, quickly, and waggled in stupid fashion; his eyes took on a vacant expression, which changed in a moment to a look of mingled horror and unbelief.

He was holding in his hand a one-hundred-dollar bill.

It was not a crisp one-hundred-dollar bill, but was a very good specimen of its kind. Pinned to it was a sheet of ordinary hotel note paper, on which, written hurriedly, appeared the words "Tempo di Valse."

Really, the century certificate was pinned to the sheet of note paper, but it seemed the other way round to Tempest. He continued to stare at it in stupefaction.

Twenty minutes before this painful occurrence. Henry Tempest, free lance, had entered the lobby of the Hotel Splendid jingling in his trousers pocket two keys, two pennies, a nickle and a dog license of brass. It had occurred to him that he might encounter a friendly reporter with the remnants of a two dollar "touch" about his person. The pleasant vision had progressed as far as the Celtic bar—finished in Turkish walnut—and there terminated.

Had the epoch-making call come five minutes later it is likely he would have been out of gunshot at the Hotel Merlin, in which event midnight would have found him at Wrangler's, where the newspaper boys have a farewell "brain duster" shortly after the witching hour. After that—well, Charles Dudley Warner has expressed it: "There is so little to do between midnight and bedtime!"

As a matter of fact, the hour was not yet nine p. m., and from a penniless derelict Tempest had been magically transformed, or translated, or transmuted into a pluted bloatocrat.

"Strike me blooming pink," he observed softly, "if something hasn't happened to me, at last!" He added, as the probable solution of the mystery flashed into his head: "Bet somebody's trying to kid me. Wonder what's the matter with this bill. And why the 'Tempo di Valse?' But if this is a regular bill it sure is 'waltz time' for me!"

With quick determination he strode to the cigar stand, unpinning the sheet of

paper and thrusting it into his pocket as he progressed.

"Billy," he urged, "will you glance carelessly over this sheet of our currency and tell me frankly, and without fear or hesitation, just why it is no good?"

Billy examined the bill with interest and returned it.

"What's the matter with it?" he asked. "Looks all right to me."

"God bless you, Billy," quoth Tempest reverently, and turned away. He paused long enough to add over his shoulder: "I got it in a letter for some work I had done. I didn't expect that much and it sort of non-plussed me. That's the word Bill, isn't it? Non-plus? Much obliged for your expert opinion."

"If you'll wait till I'm off duty I'll help you spend it," remarked Billy, just too late to be heard. Tempest was carrying his six feet of nervous energy swiftly toward the front door.

On the sidewalk he stopped again.

"Now where the hell *did* that hundred come from?" he demanded, "There's no use pretending it was meant for me. Somebody's made a mistake—but, oh, what I could do with that bullion!"

His thoughts continued: "And that 'Tempo di Valse' thing. Sounds like code to me. Best thing I can do is turn the whole business over to the police. Chances are there's a good story in it somewhere and I could get that, anyway, but oh, you little century!"

Tempest was considerable of a nuisance in newspaper circles. He was one of these stage struck individuals whose dream it is to become a reporter. He was widely known, too, and carefully avoided by those fortunate vagabonds who had jobs, because of his habit—a chronic one—of borrowing quarters. Otherwise he was an amiable youth, with a fondness for Richard Harding Davis and Kelly pool.

At that moment he was engaged in as tough a wrestling match with a dormant conscience as any Jacob ever negotiated with an angel. The match went to Tempest, however, on points.

"I have a check coming to-morrow for that Austin layout," he reflected, "and if there's any trouble about this I can make good the little I spend to-night. So be it!"

He changed the big bill at Wrangler's and hastened away. Romance and adventure called him.

As he proceeded toward the elevated station at Fifth avenue and Madison street, he encountered the musical critic of the Herald.

"Say, Vallely," he inquired, as he seized that person by the arm, "'Tempo di Valse' means 'waltz time' doesn't it?"

"It does indeed," replied the surprised expert. "Why?"

"Well, I thought it did, but I wasn't sure," explained Tempest, lucidly. "I'm going out to White City to write up the dance hall. One can't be too positive about these musical terms, you know. G'night!"

The wheels ground out waltz music all the way to the south side.

White City was a blaze of light. It always is. The roads were congested with young men and young women, in pairs, as they always are. The barkers howled as if the tinkers were coming to town. The shrill screams of chute-shooting boatloads alternated with the crash and rattle of the unspeakable "figure eight." In the lulls of this cacophony it was apparent that the band was still playing on, in the pavilion.

Ignoring the seductions on all sides, Tempest swung joyously toward the palace of Terpsichore. He was fond of dancing, and the siren strains called alluringly. The orchestra was playing a tango.

"Why not a waltz?" he thought, complainingly, and went inside.

"Tra la, la la, la la, Lah!" And then, "Umph, tra la la, la la Lah!"

You know the "Mustard?"

It got into Tempest's feet, so that they moved restlessly; but he decided to watch a while before going onto the floor, himself. For the most part, he concluded, after a period of spectatorship, the dancers were shop girls and their escorts. The girls, generally, were attractive. He wondered, however, what they could see in the young men with whom they danced.

Glide, glide, sway;—glide, glide, sway.

Over on the far side of the hall a graceful brunette, tall and Spanish, was dancing with a man in a waiter's coat. He seemed to be an assistant dancing master or something of the sort. The girl was a beauty.

"Tra la, la la, la la, Lah! Umph, tra la la....."

When it was over Tempest shouldered his way across the floor and presented himself before the "Spanish jade," which was the way he had mentally catalogued her.

"You may call a policeman, if you like," he said, "but I warn you it will do no good. I have made up my mind to dance with you. I know every copper in town, and I'll bet you don't know one."

The girl laughed.

"You don't look like a dangerous character," she said.

"Only when roused to uncontrollable anger," he assured her. "May I have the next dance?"

Pleased with her reply, he slid into the seat beside her.

"My name is Lee," he lied, cheerfully, "and I would rather dance than eat."

"Mine is Clairmont," said the Spanish jade, "and I never eat between meals."

They had several dances, as a matter of fact, and Tempest thereby drew upon himself the displeasure of divers young men whose preferences also were Castilian.

"She dances as well as she is beautiful," thought the enchanted youth. "No, I mean, as much as she is——" He gave it up.

"Say," he exclaimed, suddenly, in the midst of a glorious two-step. "I've just tumbled! You're Ina Clairmont of the 'Follies'!"

"I've known that all the time," said Miss Clairmont with naive modesty.

"Whadda ya know about that?" Tempest exploded. "What in the world brings you here?"

"I'm supposed to have a sore throat," explained Miss Clairmont, "but don't be alarmed. I haven't. It got me an evening off, however, and I'm thoroughly enjoying it."

"But—White City—" he stared. "There are hundreds of places—"

"Sick of 'em all," declared his partner. "This is the first time in years I've thoroughly enjoyed myself. Used to come here when I was a kid."

Tempest laughed suddenly.

"I may as well fess up, myself," he announced. "My name isn't Lee, but Tempest, and I'm a newspaper reporter. (He was, as much as he was anything.) I always have the evening off. Gee, and I thought you were a shop girl!"

"I take it that the occurrences of this evening are not for publication?" queried Miss Clairmont, archly.

"Not on your—I should say not!" voiced the young man with explosive warmth.

At the close of the dance his partner said:

"As a matter of fact, Mr. Tempest, I came here to-night with the deliberate intention of winning the prize waltz. You know they give a prize of one hundred dollars every week, on this night, to the most graceful couple on the floor. You and I will each have fifty dollars when we leave."

"Oh, *will* we?" echoed Tempest.

"We sure *will*," said the young woman with such conviction that he believed her.

The contest conditions were absurd, Tempest thought. They involved a fearful strain on the instep. If either of a dancing couple lowered his or her heels to the floor for an instant, during the waltz, that couple was declared out. It developed, therefore, into an endurance contest.

Miss Claimont's limbs apparently were strong. Tempest recalled them, vaguely, in newspaper prints. They preyed on his mind for a time after he had recalled the particular picture. He handled himself rather well, and there could have been no doubt about the result. They simply danced away with the prize.

"Tempo di Valse," said the vagabond, enigmatically, as they listened to the applause that followed the presentation of the prize.

Miss Clairmont looked at him curiously. "What do you mean?" she asked.

"Oh, that's a sort of fetish of mine," he laughed. "It's an 'Open Sesame' to mysterious coffers. Whenever I say it, someone walks up and hands me money."

They had an argument about the division of the prize.

"Of course you must take half," insisted Miss Clairmont. "I never would have won it, alone; or with any other dancer on the floor, either."

In the end, Tempest pocketed his fifty without much embarrassment. After all, she made more money in a night than he did in a month. Comic opera songbirds come high.

She would not permit him to see her to her hotel, so after they had dined royally at a good café he put her in a taxi, paid the chauffeur for an hour's time, and blew a kiss to her from his finger tips. Miss Clairmont waved her hand in reply and smiled.

Tempest walked away on air.

"If that girl should take a fancy to me," he muttered, "I'd say 'Yes' so quick the sun wouldn't shine!"

Two hours before he had been broke. Now, standing on a street corner some miles distant from the Hotel Splendid, he had in his pocket—in addition to his keys and his dog license—just $141.65.

IN his shabby bedroom in a north side rooming house, Tempest sat reading the morning paper. Ordinarily he found little enough of interest to him; but on this morning two stories flared out at him as if they had been printed in "caps." One he read with growing horror. It set forth:

"An unsuccessful attempt on the life of Eugene Karadac, the well known violinist, was made by a woman late last evening in the lobby of the Hotel Splendid. The woman, one of the musician's several divorced wives, fired three shots at her former husband, none of which took effect. Miraculously, no one in the lobby was hit.

The woman was seized by hotel detectives and turned over to the police.

"An interesting sidelight on the affair is narrated by Attorney George Ballard, representing Mr. Karadac. It seems that word of the woman's presence in the city had come to the lawyer's ears, and, fearing mischief, he endeavored to warn the violinist. He sent a hurried note to the hotel, which was left at the desk with instructions that it should be delivered at once. Lest the musician should be caught without funds, in the emergency, he inclosed a bill for $100. Neither note nor money reached Mr. Karadac, although the hotel insists they were delivered. It is likely that this has no bearing on the main incident, although—"

Tempest groaned. It was bad enough any way, but suppose Karadac had been killed! He gave the matter some careful and apprehensive thought, and ended by congratulating himself on having the hundred intact, thanks to Miss Ina Clairmont.

That recalled the other story:

"Miss Ina Clairmont, star of the 'Follies' was taken ill suddenly, shortly after the beginning of the second act, last night, and the curtain was hastily rung down while a doctor was summoned. The delay was only temporary, it transpired, and after a short wait the opera was resumed with a substitute in the leading role."

There was more of it, but that was enough. Tempest was distinctly puzzled. With the matter of the hundred dollars on his mind he found difficulty concerning his wits, but he was certain there was something wrong. Perhaps there had been a mistake, and the article should have read "after the beginning of the first act." That would give Miss Clairmont time to reach White City. She had told him she was supposed to be ill, but she had neglected an unconscionable lot of details.

Gad, what a mess he had blundered into! It was imperative that he see Ballard at once if he wished it to appear that he had hastened to the lawyer immediately upon learning whose hundred he had. But Tempo di Valse?"

"That means more than appears on its face. There's a story back of it, as sure as I'm a foot high. Karadac is a violinist, and 'Tempo di Valse' would have meant something to him, if he'd got the note—

something other than 'waltz time,' too."

He called up the city editor of the Telegram.

"If you care to let me handle that Karadac story," he said, "I think I can round up a good yarn. I know Ballard pretty well and, besides, I was at the hotel last night at about the time this affair was pulled. (He didn't say which affair.) I've an idea I can pretty nearly locate that hundred." The city editor said: "Go to it!"

As he started to leave the house his landlady, who loved him despite the tardiness of his payments, handed him a letter that had just come. It was addressed in a flowing hand to "H. C. Tempest, Esq." He thrust it unopened into his pocket and left the place, thoughtfully.

Mr. Ballard was glad to see Mr. Tempest, it seemed, and Mr. Tempest came to the point without wasting any of his fine vocabulary.

"Great Cats!" cried the lawyer, when he had finished. "So you got that hundred!" He looked thoughtful for a moment and then he laughed.

"How much've you got left?" he grinned.

"It's all here, honest Injun," said Tempest, breathlessly.

"Well, it's too late to save poor old Karadac trouble, but I suppose I can't very well blame you. Hand it over."

Tempest produced the identical bill. He had been at pains to procure it at Wrangler's before making his call.

"What does 'Tempo di Valse' stand for?" he demanded, as he relinquished the money.

Attorney Ballard laughed again.

"I'll gamble," he said, "that it puzzled you a bit, anyway. As a matter of strict truth, Tempest, I'd rather not tell you the story, if you're going to print it. I told the papers about all I care to about that feature of the case. At the same time, I suppose you are entitled to know, and I'd rather you'd print the truth than any conclusions you may have reached, yourself. Sounds mysterious, doesn't it? Tell you what I'll do. I'll tell you about 'Tempo di Valse' and then you fix up something else for the paper."

Tempest waited without promising.

"You see," the lawyer continued, "I've known for some time that Karadac's wife was on his trail. He's known it, too. I'm his attorney, and just between us girls we've had the devil's own time shooing off this old lady before. We've been keeping track of her, and I told Karadac that whenever I got wind of her arrival I'd warn him in a hurry, so he could skip out, if necessary.

"Well, you know what happened. She showed up, last night, at the hotel. I knew she was in town, but had no idea she meant business in quite the sensational fashion she chose. I knew old Karadac wasn't any too well fixed for change at the moment, so I pinned that hundred to my note and tried to get it to him. If you hadn't interfered in our plans he would be out of the city, now, and the lady would be out of jail."

"I'm sorry for Karadac," Tempest confessed; "but what the dickens does 'Tempo di Valse' mean? That is, outside of 'waltz time?'"

"That's all—just 'waltz time.' Time to waltz—to skip—to vamoose—to light out. Anything you like. In fact, it was his own suggestion. He understood it—or would have, if he'd got it. He has a streak of humor under his hair, and it tickled him to work out a code in musical terms to cover any contingencies that might arise."

"Clever," the interviewer commented. "Hm-m! So simple that I muffed it. Sun in my eyes, I guess."

He added: "Say, Mr. Ballard, I'd like to see the note that *was* intended for me, if there was a mixup in delivery. Karadac turned it over to you, I suppose?"

The lawyer smiled quizzically and produced it. It bore no superscription, and was signed "Carson"—the managing editor of the Tribune. It read:

"I'm told you may be reached usually at the Splendid bar. As I happen to be short a man for a couple of months, you may consider yourself engaged for the period, if this reaches you. Report at seven a. m."

In the light of all that had gone before, it looked tame to Tempest; yet he had been

trying to land a job with the Tribune for weeks. Probably too late, now—still a job was a job.

"You won't want me any further, I suppose?" He looked inquiringly at the lawyer.

"Well, you can make a statement of how the hundred came into your possession to my stenographer, and sign it," was the response. "That will probably be enough. I may not have to use it."

He stepped to the door of an inner office and called: "Miss Collins."

The biggest shock of all was to come.

Tailored neatly in brown, pad and pencil in hand, Miss Ina Clairmont answered the call.

They saw one another at the same instant. It took their breaths away, individually and collectively. Tempest's eyes bugged out; Miss Clairmont's cheeks flamed red.

The vagabond news gatherer, used to surprises and unused to betraying his emotions, recovered first.

"Ah—good morning, Miss—Collins," he grinned.

Miss Collins stammered something that sounded like Chinese. She was crimson to the neck and singularly confused.

"What's this?" exclaimed the lawyer, suspiciously. "You know each other?"

"Rather!" Tempest confirmed the happy guess. "We met at a dance," he explained, "and I think we both fibbed, just a little." He had no intention of being malicious, but he wanted to rub it in a bit. Miss Collins flashed a scornful glance at him that moved him to contrition at once.

"Well, I did," he hurried on, gallantly. "I told Miss Collins I was a 'movie' actor, and—"

"You look like a couple of lovers caught on the veranda," said the lawyer, bluntly, which failed to help matters. "Well, take this statement, Miss Collins, and never again put your trust in newspaper men."

In some manner the young woman managed to get it on paper. Tempest signed it, with her eyes on his hand.

"So your name really *is* Tempest," she remarked, when she had gone back to her desk and Tempest had accompanied her, boldly. Her composure was now perfect. She looked as charming as ever.

"Yes," he answered, looking her in the eyes, "I, at least, scorned to use an alias."

"You were absolutely malicious in front of Mr. Ballard," she told him, unmoved.

"I'm sorry," he answered, truthfully. "I hope it won't hurt your standing here. I had no idea—"

"It won't," said the young woman, calmly. "I have already given Mr. Ballard notice that I quit at the end of the week."

"You're leaving! I hope for something better. I go to the Tribune, myself, tomorrow." He was talking absently. He was wishing—oh, how he was wishing—that he was less of an ass, and more of a money maker, and could offer her a certain job, the very thought of which set his pulses fluttering.

"I'm going on the stage," she defiantly announced. "I had intended to look you up, make my confession, and tell you about it, in the hope that—"

Suddenly she produced from a drawer a square envelope addressed in a flowing hand to "Miss Florence Collins." Something in the appearance of it woke a slumbering cell in the Tempest thinking apparatus. He dived into his pocket and brought out its duplicate—the letter handed him by his landlady as he left the house.

"You got one, too!" she almost shouted.

"Whatever it is, I've got it," he replied grimly. "I haven't opened it yet."

"Good heavens!" cried Miss Collins.

She spread out her own letter before him. He read it in dazed fashion. He read it twice, hardly daring to believe.

"Oh, you big stupid!" She snatched the letter away from him. "Read your own if you don't believe it."

He tore open the twin letter and handed it to her.

"Read it to me," he said huskily. "Read it—and tell me if it offers me ten weeks in vaudeville—with the young woman who was my partner at the White City contest."

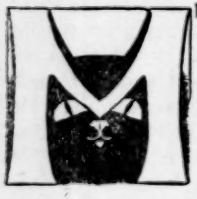
"I don't have to read it," she said. "It does, and so does mine."

"My God!" quoth Tempest with reverent ecstasy. "Ten weeks—ten years—with you."

THE MAN WITH THE STICK

By CLARENCE L. HAY

Mr. Felton is a keen student of character, but not keen enough to know that the Pittsburgher is never so wide awake as when he runs over to New York to wash his face and get the soft-coal smoke out of his eyes.



R. Frederick Felton, known to the plain clothes force of Mulberry Street as "Chicago Fred," leaned against the polished bar of the Bijou Café and rested his chin on the nob of a fat cane. Mr. Felton was studying character. The eyes peering through the half-closed lids missed few of the happenings within the room.

A stout man slouched carelessly by, brushing roughly against Felton as he passed.

"Two suckers from Pittsburgh down the mahogany," he whispered. "The two in the zebra rigging."

Mr. Felton gave no immediate indication that he had heard. He did not change his position, and he continued to gaze listlessly at the talking groups. The fat man lurched down the room, and, seating himself at an empty table, ordered a cocktail.

Presently the man with the cane stirred himself. He stood upright, picked up his gloves and sauntered in the direction taken by the man who had given him the information. But the deep-sunken eyes were extremely watchful. Mr. Felton scented game.

Half way down the room, two overdressed young men were disputing loudly. Felton halted within a yard of them and busied himself in lighting a cigar. The occupation gave him an opportunity to listen to the dispute.

"It was Jack Hickey played that year," cried the eldest of the two. "He was—"

"You're wrong! It was Murphy," interrupted the other. "I'm willing to wager. I'll bet—"

Chicago Fred, holding a lighted match in his fingers, leaned slightly forward. "At Pittsburgh?" he queried. "Pardon me, I overheard your argument."

The two men turned. "It was at Pittsburgh," answered the eldest. "Last year when the 'Tigers' played—"

"Then you are right," murmured Mr. Felton. "It was Jack Hickey. I know him well."

The fat man leisurely sipping his cocktail, eyed the three stealthily. The "butting in" act performed by Chicago Fred interested him greatly, and he breathed a compliment into his glass as he noted how successfully his pal had performed the trick.

And Mr. Felton deserved a compliment. He backed his assertions concerning Hickey with such a mass of detail that the younger man acknowledged that he was in error, and as a proof that his acknowledgment was sincere, he invited the arbitrator to drink with himself and his companion.

Felton accepted, but when the drinks had been served, he remembered that he was suffering from a sprained ankle, and using the injured limb as an excuse for preferring a sitting position, he adroitly steered his two companions to the table where the fat man was sitting.

That person shook himself out of an apparent slumber, and, wonderful to relate, found after listening to a story that Mr. Felton had related to the two young men, that he knew one of the principal characters. He seemed childishly overjoyed at making this discovery, and he insisted on the three joining him in drinking the health of the absent one. Mr. Felton and the two young men laughingly consented, and the conversation grew louder.

After some fifteen minutes had passed,

Chicago Fred thought of an appointment, and with evident reluctance took leave of the three and hurried away, leaving the fat man and the other two in the midst of a hot dispute over baseball. The fat man as a conversationalist ranked high, and he cemented the newly formed friendship with every word he uttered. He proved himself a baseball authority of the first order, and the other two were apparently delighted with his freely delivered judgments and speculations.

In a lull in the conversation some few minutes after Felton's departure, the fat man discovered that Chicago Fred had forgotten his walking stick, and he laughed heartily as he picked the cane up from the floor and exhibited it to the two others.

"It's only a cheap pole," he gurgled. "It's a fifty cent—"

He stopped suddenly and a look of surprise spread over his fat face. He had, while twirling the stick around in his fingers, accidentally unscrewed the knob on the top, disclosed a little receptacle containing a ten-dollar gold piece.

"Gee!" he gasped. "He keeps his bank here!"

The two young men examined the stick with evident curiosity, while the fat man showed much excitement over the discovery. He chuckled loudly, and pointed to his own smartness in making the find.

"We'll have a lark," he gurgled, winking knowingly at the other two. "We'll take out the coin and hold it, and he'll get a shock when he comes back for the stick."

The eldest of the two gave a laughing assent, and put the gold coin in his pocket. The stick, with the knob replaced, was then put back in the same position it occupied when the fat man had discovered it. That person chuckled continually as he watched the door for the expected arrival of Felton, and his excitement marred the brilliancy of his conversation.

It wasn't a long wait. Chicago Fred came bustling back inside of ten minutes, and he stepped swiftly across the room and grasped his cane.

"I'm lucky!" he cried, turning to his late companions. "I was afraid you three might have left the café and thus given a person of loose morals a chance to annex my cane."

"Is it worth annexing?" asked the fat man quietly.

Chicago Fred turned and stared at the questioner.

"It might not look it to you," he said coldly, "but I'll wager a trifle that any sane man in the café will give me ten dollars for it."

The fat man passed a quick wink to the two young men as he reached out his hand for the cane. After examining it carefully he handed it back, and with cool insolence remarked: "It's worth seventy cents at the outside."

Mr. Frederick Felton became violently excited. He pulled a roll from his pocket and started to peel off bills with nervous fingers. The taunt stirred him.

"I'll bet you a century," he cried angrily.

"What about?" asked the fat man.

"I'll bet that the stick is worth ten dollars to any one in the room," screamed the owner.

The fat man gave a slight whistle to signify his surprise at the other's heat, and again passed a quick wink to the two sitting opposite. The wink carried the hint that there were many good dollars belonging to Mr. Felton that might be gathered in by an enterprising person.

"I have only fifty dollars with me!" drawled the fat man, "but if one of our friends chips in for another fifty we'll cover your hundred and bet that the stick is not worth ten dollars, I'm hanged if we don't."

Mr. Frederick Felton and his fat pal received a surprise when they saw the eagerness with which the eldest of the two Pittsburghers jumped at the suggestion. The firm of Felton and Co. generally experienced a little trouble at this point, and inwardly they voted the other the greenest of suckers as he placed five ten-dollar bills on the pile.

"I'm in," he laughed, carelessly. "I'm betting just for the fun of the thing. Now, sir, will you kindly find the jay in this room who will give ten dollars for the stick."

With a nervous smile on his face, Mr. Frederick Felton advanced to the table and unscrewed the knob of the stick. The three watched him keenly.

Felton gave a little start of simulated astonishment when he found the receptacle empty, and a smile started to ripple the fat features of the man who had abstracted the coin. But Chicago Fred was not dismayed. He had looked into that empty receptacle on many occasions when the circumstances were precisely similar, and yet his confidence had not deserted him. With an airy flourish he turned the stick in his hand, and unscrewing the ferrule end, shook the cane over the table.

Nothing fell out of it. Chicago Fred paled slightly and shook the stick fiercely. When he turned the cane to look into the opening, the eldest of the two Pittsburghers reached out and put a big hand on the pile of notes.

"There's nothing in that end either," he laughed, as Felton looked into the empty hole. "While your fat partner was waiting for your return to play us for a brace of suckers, *I managed to get that other ten-dollar piece out of the bottom end, so I've spiked your gun.* I've seen the trick before, see."

Chicago Fred glared angrily at the three, while the fat man's profanity was seriously interfered with by the astonishment brought about by the turning of the tables.

"Here!" cried the Pittsburgher, jerking two ten-dollar gold pieces towards the owner of the cane. "Here's the two coins your pal and I took out of the stick. Now, I'll give our fat friend his own fifty back, but I'm keeping the century that you plunked because you were so sure of that coin being in the bottom of the cane. If you object I'll call a cop. Skidoo! Next time you have a sucker on the line, watch the stick.

When Chicago Fred turned the first corner, he stopped five minutes to curse the intelligence of his fat partner who had allowed a "come on" to take a cool century from the smartest bunco man in Manhattan. And the fat man could not reply because he had not recovered from the shock.

The Black Cat Club

PRIZES for criticisms of the stories in the August number were awarded to the following members: Mrs. John R. Powell, St. Louis, Mo.; Miss Harriette Wilbur, Duluth, Minn.; H. L. Greenwald, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Mrs. Grace Kerwin, Manchester, N. H.; Miss Janet Hayes, New York, N. Y.; Miss Bessie Loesges, Riverside, Ills.; Edward B. Fenn, Meriden, Conn.; Frank G. Davis, Richmond, Va.; Mrs. Frank J. Link, Chicago, Ills.; Mrs. E. J. Stroud, Kansas City, Mo. As there were seventeen prizes, and but ten criticisms received, seven one-dollar prizes were not awarded. The ten-dollar prize for securing new members was not awarded.

Stories are criticised in the order of their popularity.

The One Witness is one more example of the BLACK CAT'S partiality for genre subjects, lowly personalities and sordid surroundings. It shows careful building, in both the number of details and the order in which each is introduced. The author's strong point is the creation of pictures. One visualizes the characters easily, which fact proves his power to delineate. The stopped clock, the half-eaten meal, the overturned chair, the knife on the floor, together with the absence of Mamma Snider and the parrot, bespeak haste which connects itself with crime in the reader's mind as well as in the sergeant's. Sergeant McCully's reasoning is canny without being so correct as to be uncanny. His error in assuming another woman in the case is natural, and temporarily deepens the mystery without complicating the denouement. This also helps to create suspense, which otherwise would not hold up, and only injures the story as it tends to weaken the impression by piling up the detail. The doubtful point is the parrot's ability to memorize Mamma Snider's cries of distress and his being shocked into a lethargy which only the presence of the murderer could break; but granting Captain Pete to be a super-parrot, the whole fabrication becomes quite logical. The climax is dramatic; but, as in many mys-

tery stories, the denouement is too sustained, taking on the qualities of the journalistic narration.

Carter Robb Also Ran describes humorously, and yet sympathetically, the efforts of a born trader and an accomplished whittler to transform himself into a successful politician. The characterization of Carter Robb is well done, from the first paragraph describing the perked-up hat brim to the last one regarding the tear of regret and lost hopes. Naturally, Carter undervalues his trading abilities and overestimates his office-seeking qualities, and is correspondingly disappointed when he fails in his ambitions, for all that he succeeds along the line of his talents. A bit of irony tucked into the tale consists in the reflection that by getting the best of the bargain in each instance, Carter left a bad taste in the memory of each solicited voter, which persisted until election day. A better politician would have yielded the bargain to the voter, and so Carter's talents get the better of his ambitions. Mahaly's reform, from ridiculing his trading ability to admiring it, is a blessing entirely overlooked by the beneficiary. Robb does not realize how successful he is becouse his good fortune arises from his political failure. His wife, however, is too shrewd not to see the possibilities. Robb sees the hole, but Mrs. Robb sees the doughnut.. Little does the practical Mahaly care that they have "whupped" her man. Has he not found himself? There is a chance that the tragedy of living may be mitigated a little.

For the proportions of characterization, love element and adventure, *At Six Bells Saturday* surpasses all other stories in the issue. There is an occasional forced dignity in the diction of the story that contrasts sharply, but neither pleasantly nor convincingly, with the dialect portion of the story. When Rolly, the "gold-braider," is made to look "into the eyes that glared into his with a hatred, an implacable fury appalling," one's attention is called pointedly to the inherent difference between the revenue officer and the sister of the smuggler and one feels that the love that is supposed to exist between them is highly improbable. This love story is used only as a raison d'ètre for old Den's sacrifice, and the author omits to give the reader any evidence that the heroine had any qualities, other than courage, that would make a man look twice in her direction, especially a man of a very different world. One might be inclined to accept, without cavelling, the love element had the narrative concerned itslf in the end as in the beginning with the character and the emotions of Old Den. He is the central figure and the only one that counts.

Putting On Arbutzoff is full of good, wholesome fun from begining to end. By use of a questionable Russian semblance of a play, the author satirizes the present fad of the literary clubs in their study of Russian literature and drama. There are innumerable real subtleties in the take-off. Mrs. Neville, as the type of heavily earnest seeker after culture, losing an oar, as she paddles about in her trite comments, is especially good. Another humorous touch is the narrator's pity for Bindle's blunder, followed immediately by his own blunder. This picture of the struggles of aspiring souls to put on the cheerful little one-act "Bloody Dawn" to uplift the community standards of art recalls a remark heard at just such a performance: "Well, the nearer one approaches to art, the closer one gets, apparently, to the gutter!" The diction is diverting and the author does not find it necessary to tell us when to laugh or explain why we should feel amused. The laughs come spontaneously, the best proof that the story is funny. Its fun, however, is natural and the imitation of the phonograph is decidedly real.

Tribulation and Calamity is a story of rather slap-stick action—a medium for the portrayal of rustic smartness, chiefly on the part of a girl, and Honest Henry, who begins and ends his tale with his feet in a litter of papers on his desk. One suspects that this is about as close as Henry ever gets to real usefulness, after his one tremendous accomplishment of winning the girl. There are some good bits of contrast, notably that contained in the clever youthfulness of Cherrylips, and the tenacity of his memory for relationships on the part of the deaf old man. Perhaps the best part of the story, for form and naturalness, is the interview with the latter. The love element is casually brought in and shows the managing and business ability of the girl in sharp contrast to the slow moving future husband, who *is* good at playing checkers. Although it could have been somewhat condensed, the story does not drag. The legal aspect is a little hazy, and the many characters make the action confusing.

Zeke deals with life in the raw, and does it with no glossing over with conventionalities. The style of the story is more literary than that of the others. The characterization is excellently done, and both Zeke and Sophie-Lizzie stand there on the dock at Wisby Waterless as flesh and blood people. Not much happens, but since there is so much psychology in what takes place, the author tells far more than the practical joke Zeke's friends would find in it. The story gains compression from having a minimum of characters, a single scene, and a short time-space.

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